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Old Kensington.

CHAPTER VI.

DOWNSTAIRS IN THE DARK.



HERE are old houses in other places besides Kensington. Perhaps, it is from early associations that Dolly has always had so great a liking for walls furnished with some upholstery of the past, and set up by strong hands that seem to have had their own secrets for making their work last on. Some of these old piles stand like rocks, defying our lives as they have defied the generations before us. We come upon them everywhere, set upon high hills, standing in wide country-places, crowded into the narrow streets of a city. Perhaps it is the golden Tiber that flows past the old doorways, perhaps it is the Danube rushing by, or the grey Thames running to the marshes, or the Seine as it shines between the banks. There is an old house in the Champs Elysées at Paris where most English people have lived in turn, and to which Dolly's fate brought her when she was about twelve years old.

The prompter rings the bell, and the scene shifts to the *Maison Vélin*,
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and to one night, twenty years ago, when the two little girls were tucked up in bed. The dim night-light was put on the round marble table, the curtains were drawn, but all the same they could hear the noise of the horses trampling and the sabots clanking in the courtyard down below. Lady Sarah had sent her little niece to bed, and she now stood at the door and said, "Good-night, my dears." The second night-cap was only that of a little stray school-girl come to spend a holiday, from one of those vast and dreary establishments scattered all about the deserted suburbs of the great city : of which the lights were blazing from the uncurtained drawing-room windows, and its great semicircle of dark hills flashing.

Lady Sarah had come to Paris to meet Dolly's mamma, who had been married more than a year by this time, and who was expected home at last. She was coming *alone*, she wrote. She had at length received Captain Palmer's permission to visit her children ; but not even her wishes could induce him to quit his beloved frigate. She should, therefore, leave him cruising along the Coromandel coast, and start in January, for which month her passage was taken. She implored Lady Sarah to meet her in Paris, where some weeks' rest would be absolutely necessary, she said, to recruit her strength after the fatigue of her journey ; and Lady Sarah, with some misgiving, yielded to Dolly's wistful entreaties, and wrote to her old friend the Rev. W. Lovejoy, of the Marmouton Chapel, to take rooms for her for a few weeks, during which Dolly might improve her French accent and her style of dancing (Dolly had been pronounced clumsy by Mrs. Morgan) in the companionship of little Rhoda, who had been sent some time before to be established for a year in a boarding-school near Paris, there to put on the armour of accomplishments that she would require some day in the dismal battle of life.

John Morgan had been loth that the little girl should go ; he was afraid the child might feel lonely away from them all ; but Rhoda said, very sensibly, that, if she was to be a governess, she supposed she had better learn things. So Rhoda was sent off for a year to Madame Laplanche's, towards the end of which time Lady Sarah came to Paris with Dolly, and the faithful Marker in attendance.

Dolly did not trouble her head very much about her accent, but she was delighted to be with her friend again, to say nothing of seeing the world and the prospect of meeting her mother. She went twice a week to Rhoda's school to learn to point her bronze toes and play on the well-worn piano ; and then every morning came Madame de St. Honoré, an old lady who instructed Mademoiselle Dolly in the grammar and literature of the country to which she belonged. French literature, according to Madame de St. Honoré, was in one snuffy volume which she happened to possess. Dolly asked no questions, and greatly preferred stray scenes out of *Athalie* and odd pages from *Paul and Virginia* to *Noel* and *Chapsal*, and *l'Abbé Gaultier's Geography*. The two would sit at the dining-room table with the windows open, and the cupboards full of French china, and with the head of Socrates staring at them from over the stove.

Mr. Lovejoy had selected for his old friend a large and dilapidated set of rooms, the chairs and tables of which had seen better days, and had been in their prime during the classic furniture period of the Great Napoleon.

The tall white marble clock on the chimney-piece had struck nine, and Lady Sarah was sitting alone in the carpetless drawing-room on one of the stiff-backed chairs. It was early times for two girls of eleven and twelve to be popped away out of the world ; but Lady Sarah was at that time a strict disciplinarian, and seemed to think that one of the grand objects of life was to go to bed and be up again an hour in advance of everybody else.

"And so there is only dreaming till to-morrow morning," thought Dolly, with a dreary wide-awake sigh. Dolly and Henriette her maid had two beds side by side. Dolly used to lie wide-awake in hers, watching the dawn as it streamed through the old flowered chintz curtains, and the shadows and pictures flying from the corners of the room ; or, when the night-light burnt dimly, and the darkness lay heaped against the walls, Dolly, still childish for her age, could paint pictures for herself upon it, bright phantasmagorias woven out of her brain, faces and flowers and glittering sights such as those she saw when she was out in the day-time. Dolly thought the room was enchanted, and that fairies came into it as soon as Henriette was asleep and snoring. To-night little Rhoda was sleeping in the bed, and Henriette and Marker were sitting at work in the next room. They had left the door open ; and presently, when they thought the children were asleep, began a low, mysterious conversation in French.

"She died on Tuesday," said Henriette, "and is to be buried to-morrow."

"She could not have been twenty," said Marker ; "and a sweet pretty lady. I can't think where it is I have seen such another as her."

"Pauvre dame," said Henriette. "He feels her death very much. He is half-distracted, Julie tells me."

"Serve him right, the brute ! I should like to give it him !" cries the other.

"He looks such a handsome smiling gentleman, that Mr. Rab—Rap—. Who could have thought it possible ?"

"Oh, they're all smiling enough," said Marker, who knew the world. "There was a young man in a grocer's shop—" And her voice sank into confidences still more mysterious.

"When they came to measure her for her coffin," said Henriette, who had a taste for the terrible, "they found she had grown since her death, poor thing. Julie tells me that she looks more beautiful than you can imagine. He comes and cries out, 'Emma ! Emma !' as if he could wake her and bring her to life."

"Wake her and bring her to life to kill her again, the wretch !" said Marker, "with his neglect and cruelty."

"He is very young—a mere boy," said Henriette. "The concierge says there was no malice in him; and then he gave her such beautiful gowns! There was a moire-antique came home the day she died, with lace trimmings. Julie showed it me: she expects to get all the things. They were going to a ball at the Tuilleries. How beautiful she would have looked!"

"Poor child!" said Marker.

"To die without ever putting it on! Dame, I should not like that; but I should like to have a husband who would buy me such pretty things. I would not mind his being out of temper now and then, and leaving me to do as I liked for a month or two at a time. I should have amused myself, instead of crying all day, as she did. Julie tells me she has tried on the black velvet, and it fits her perfectly."

"Julie ought to be ashamed of herself," growled Marker, "with the poor child lying there still."

"Not in the least," said Henriette; "Julie was very fond of her when she was alive—now she is dead—that is another thing. She says she would not stop in the room for worlds. She thought she saw her move yesterday, and she rushed away into the kitchen and had an *attaque de nerfs* in consequence."

"But did she tell nobody—could it have been true?"

"Françoise told *him*, and they went in immediately, but it was all silent as before. I am glad I sleep upstairs: I should not like to be in the room over that one. It is underneath there where are *les petites*."

"She would do no one harm, now or when she was alive, poor thing," said Marker. "I should like to flay that man alive."

"That would be a pity, Mrs. Marker," said Henriette: "a fine young man like that! He liked her well enough, *allez!* She cried too much: it was her own fault that she was not happy."

"I would rather be her than him at this minute," said Marker. "Why he scolded and sulked and sneered and complained of the bills when he was at home, and went away for days together without telling her where he was going. I know where he was: he was gambling and spending her money on other people—I'd pickle him, I would!" said Marker; "and I don't care a snap for his looks; and her heart is as cold as his own now, poor little thing."

"It's supper-time, isn't it?" yawned Henriette.

Then Dolly heard a little rustle as they got up to go to their supper, and the light in the next room disappeared, and everything seemed very silent. The night-light sputtered a little, the noises in the courtyard were hushed, the familiar chairs and tables looked queer and unknown in the darkness. Rhoda was fast asleep and breathing softly; Dolly was kicking about in her own bed, and thrilling with terror and excitement, and thinking of what she had heard of the poor pretty lady downstairs. She and Rhoda always used to rush to the window to see her drive off in her smart little carriage, wrapped in her furs, but all alone. Poor little

lady ! her unkind husband never went with her, and used to leave her for weeks at a time. Her eyes used to shine through the veil that she always wore when they met her on the stairs ; but Aunt Sarah would hurry past her, and never would talk about her. And now she was dead. Dolly looked at Rhoda lying so still on her white pillow. How would Rhoda look when she was dead, thought Dolly.

" Being asleep is being dead. . . . I daresay people would be more afraid of dying if they were not so used to go to sleep. When I am dying—I daresay I shall die about seventeen—I shall send for John Morgan, and George will come from Eton, and Aunt Sarah will be crying, and, perhaps, mamma and Captain Palmer will be there ; and I shall hold all their hands in mine and say, ' Now be friends, for my sake.' And then I shall urge George to exert himself more, and go to church on week days ; and then to Aunt Sarah I shall turn with a sad smile, and say, ' Adieu ! dear aunt, you never understood me—you fancied me a child when I had the feelings of a woman, and you sneered at me, and sent me to bed at eight o'clock. Do not crush George and Rhoda as you have crushed me : be gentle with them ; ' and then I shall cross my hands over my chest and—and what then ? " And a sort of shock came over the girl as, perhaps for the first time in her life, she realized the awful awakening. " Suppose they bury me alive ? It is very common, I know —oh ! no, no, no ; that would be too horrible ! Suppose that poor young lady is not dead downstairs—suppose she is alive, and they bury her to-morrow, and she wakes up, and it is all dark, and she chokes and cries out, and nobody hears. . . . Surely they will take precautions ?—they will make sure. . . . Who will, I wonder ? Not that wicked husband—not that horrid maid. But the poor lady underneath, I wonder who is sitting up with her ? That wicked man has gone to gamble, I daresay ; and Julie is trying on her dresses, and perhaps her eyes are opening now and nobody to see—nobody to come. Ah ! this is dreadful. I must go to sleep and forget it."

Little Rhoda turned and whispered something in her dreams ; Dorothy curled herself up in her nest and shut her eyes, and did go to sleep for a couple of hours, and then woke up again with a start, and thought it must be morning. Had not somebody called her by name ? did not somebody whisper Dolly in her ear ? so loud that it woke her out of a strange dream : a sort of dream in which strange clanging sounds rung round and round in the air ; in which Dolly herself lay powerless, gasping and desperate on her bed. Vainly she tried to move, to call, to utter ; no one came.

Julie, in white satin, was looking at herself in the glass ; the wicked husband was standing in the door with a horrible scowl. Rhoda, somehow, was quietly asleep in her bed. Ah ! no, she, too, was dead ; she would never wake ; she would not come and save her. And just then Dolly awoke, and started up in bed with wide open childish eyes. What a still quiet room—what a dim light from the lamp—who had spoken ?

Was it a warning? was it a call? was this dream sent to her as token? as the people in the Bible dreamt dreams and dared not disobey them? Was this what was going on in the room below? was it for her to go down and save the poor lady, who might be calling to her? Something within her said "Go, go," and suddenly she found herself standing by the bedside, putting on her white dressing-gown, and then pattering out bare-footed across the wooden floors, out into the dark dining-room, out into the ante-room, all dark and black, opening the front door (the key was merely turned in the lock), walking downstairs with the dim lamps glimmering and the moonlight pouring in at the blindless window; and standing at the door of the apartment below. Her only thought was wonder at finding it so easy. Then she laid her hand softly on the lock and turned it, and the door opened, and she found herself in an ante-room like their own, only carpeted and alight. The room was under her own: she knew her way well enough. Into the dark dining-room she passed with a beating heart, and so came to a door beneath which a ray of light was streaming. And then she stopped. Was this a dream? was this really herself? or was she asleep in bed upstairs? or was she, perhaps, dead in her coffin? A qualm of terror came over her—should she turn and go?—her knees were shaking, her heart was beating so that she could hardly breathe; but she would not turn back—that would be a thousand times too cowardly. Just then she thought she heard a footstep in the dining-room. With a shuddering effort she raised her hand, and in an instant she stood in the threshold of the chamber. What, was this a sacred chapel? Silence and light, many flowers, tall tapers burning. It seemed like an awful dream to the bewildered child: the coffin stood in the middle of the room, she smelt a faint odour of incense, of roses, of scented tapers, and then her heart stood still as she heard a sudden gasping sigh, and against the light an awful shrouded figure slowly rising and seeming to come towards her. It was more than she could bear; the room spun round, once more the loud clangor sounded in her ears, and poor Dolly, with a shuddering scream, fell to the ground.

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A jumble of whispers, of vinegar, of water trickling down her back, and of an officious flapping wet handkerchief; of kind arms enfolding her: of nurse saying, "Now she is coming to;" of Lady Sarah answering, "Poor little thing, she must have been walking in her sleep"—a strange new birth, new vitality pouring in at all her limbs, a dull identity coming flashing suddenly into life, and Dolly opened her eyes to find herself in the nurse's arms, with her aunt bending over her, in the warm drawing-room upstairs. Other people seemed standing about—Henriette and a man whom she could scarcely see with her dim weary eyes, and Julie. Dolly hid her face on the nurse's shoulder.

"Oh, nurse, nurse! have you saved me?" was all she could say.

"What were you doing downstairs, you naughty child?" said Lady

Sarah, in her brisk tones. "Marker heard a noise and luckily ran after you."

"Oh, Aunt Sarah, forgive me!" faltered Dolly. "I went to save the lady—I thought if she opened her eyes and there was no one there—and Julie trying on the dresses, and the wicked husband—I heard Henriette telling Marker—Oh, save me, save me!" and the poor little thing burst into tears and clung closer and closer.

"You are all safe, dear," said Marker, "and the young lady is at rest where nothing will frighten or disturb her. Hush! don't cry."

"Poor little thing," said the man, taking her hand; "do not be afraid; she is a saint in heaven. The nuns must have frightened you; and yet they are good women, and will pray and watch all through the night. You must go to sleep. Good-night." And he raised the child's hand to his lips and kissed it, and then seemed to go away.

"I'm ashamed of myself, my lady," said Marker, "for having talked as I did with the chance of the children being awake to hear me. It was downright wicked, and I should like to bite my tongue out. Go to bed, Henriette. Be off, Mamzelle July, if you please."

"We are all going to bed; but Henriette will get Miss Dolly a cup of chocolate first and a little bit of galette out of the cupboard," said Lady Sarah.

Dolly was very fond of chocolate and galette; and this little impromptu supper by the drawing-room fire did more to quiet and reassure her than anything else. But she was hardly herself as yet, and could only cling to Marker's arm and hide her face away from them all. Her aunt kissed her once more, saying, "Well, I won't scold you to-night; indeed, I am not sure but that you were quite right to go," and disappeared into her own room. Then Henriette carried the candle, and Marker carried great big Dolly and laid her down by Rhoda in her bed, and the wearied and tired little girl fell asleep at last, holding Rhoda's hand, and watching the faithful nurse as she sat sewing at the marble table.

CHAPTER VII.

CLOUD-CAPPED TOWERS AND GORGEOUS PALACES.

WHEN Dolly awoke next morning Rhoda was dressed and her bed was empty. The window had been opened, but the light was carefully shaded by the old brown curtains. Dolly lay quite still; she felt strangely tired, and as if she had been for a very long journey, toiling along a weary road. And so she had, in truth; she had travelled along a road that no one ever retraces, she had learnt a secret that no one ever forgets. Henceforth in many places and hours the vision that haunts each one of us was revealed to her; that solemn ghost of Death stood before her with its changing face, at once sad and tender and pitiless. Who shall speak of it? With

our own looks, with the familiar eyes of others, it watches us through life, the good angel and comforter of the stricken and desolate, the strength of the weak, the pitiless enemy of home and peaceful love and tranquil days. But perhaps to some of us the hour may come when we fall into the mighty arms, feeling that within them is the home and the love and the peace that they have torn from us.

Dolly was still lying quite quiet and waiting for something to happen, when the door opened, and her aunt's maid came in carrying a nice little tray with breakfast upon it. There was a roll, and some French butter in a white scroll-like saucer, and Dolly's favourite cup.

"My lady is gone out, Miss Dolly," said Marker, "but she left word you was not to be disturbed. It is eleven o'clock, and she is going to take you and Miss Rhoda for a treat when she gets back."

"A treat!" said Dolly, languidly; "that will be nice. Marker, I have to push my arms to make them go."

But when Dolly had had her bath and eaten her breakfast, her arms began to go of themselves. Once, indeed, she turned a little sick and giddy, for, happening to look out of window into the courtyard below, she saw that they were carrying away black cloths and silver-spangled draperies, which somehow brought up the terror of the night before; but her nurse kissed her, and made her kneel down and say her prayers, and told her in her homely way that she must not be afraid, that life and death were made by the same Hand, and ruled over by the same Love. "The poor young lady was buried this morning, my dear," said Marker, "before you were awake. Your aunt went with the poor young man."

Marker was a short, stout, smiling old woman. Lady Sarah was tall and thin, and silent, and seant in dress, with a brown face and grey hair; she came in, in her black gown, from the funeral, with her shaggy kind eyes red with tears.

"You won't forget, my lady, that you promised the young ladies a treat," said Marker, who was anxious that Dolly should have something fresh to think of.

"I have not forgotten," said Dolly's aunt, smiling, as she looked at the two children. "Rhoda must get a remembrance to take back to school, mustn't she, Dolly? I have ordered a carriage at two."

There is a royal palace familiar to many of us of which the courts are shining and busy, and crowded with people. Flowers are growing among fountains and foliage, and children are at play; there is a sight of high gabled roofs overhead enclosing it, so do the long lines of the ancient arcades. Some music is playing to which the children are dancing. In this strange little world the children seem to grow up to music in beautiful ready-made little frocks and pinafores, the grown-up people seem to live on grapes and ices and bonbons, and on the enormous pears displayed in the windows of the cafés. Everything is more or less gilt and twinkling, —china flowers bloom delicate and scentless; it would seem as if the

business of life consisted in wandering here and there, and sipping and resting to the sound of music in the shade of the orange-trees, and gazing at the many wonders displayed ; at the gimeracks and trinkets and strings of beads, the precious stones, and the silver and gold, and the fanciful jewels. Are these things all dust and ashes ? Here are others, again, of imitation dross and dust, shining and dazzling too ; and again, imitations of imitations for the poorest and most credulous, heaped up in harmless glitter and array. Here are opera-glasses to detect the deceptions, and the deceptions to deceive the glasses,—bubbles of pomp, thinnest gilding of vanity and good-humour.

Some twenty years ago Dorothea Vanborough and a great many ladies and gentlemen her contemporaries were not the respectable middle-aged people they are now, but very young folks standing on tip-toe to look at life, which they gazed at with respectful eyes, believing all things, hoping all things, and interested in all things beyond words or the power of words to describe. My heroine was a blooming little girl, with her thick wavy hair plaited into two long tails. She wore a great flapping hat and frilled trousers, according to the barbarous fashion of the time. Little Rhoda was shorter and slighter, with great dark eyes and a wistful pale face ; she was all shabbily dressed, and had no frills like Dolly, or flowers in her hat. The two stood gazing at the portrait of a smiling little Prince with a blue ribbon, surmounted by a wreath of flowers, glazed and enclosed in a gilt-locket. I suppose the little girls of the present* bear the same sort of allegiance to the Prince Imperial that Dolly felt for the little smiling Count of Paris of those days. For the King his grandfather, for the Dukes and Princesses his uncles, hers was a very vague devotion ; but when the old yellow royal coaches used to come by rumbling and shaking along the Champs Elysées, Dolly for one, followed by her protesting attendant, would set off running as hard as she could, and stand at the very edge of the pavement in the hopes of seeing her little smiling Prince peep out of the carriage-window. He was also to be seen in effigy on cups, on pin-boxes, and bonbons, and, above all, to be worn by the little girls in the ornamental fashion I have described. He smiled impartially from their various tuckers ; and, indeed, many of the youthful possessors of those little gilt lockets are true to this day to their early impressions.

So both Dolly and Rhoda came to tell Lady Sarah that they had made up their minds, what they most admired.

The widow had been sitting upon one of the benches in the garden, feeling not unlike the skeleton at a feast—a scanty figure in the sunshine, with a heart scarcely attuned to the bustle and chatter around her, but she began to tell herself that there must be some use even in the pomps and vanities of life, when she saw how happy the little girls looked, how the light had come into Dolly's eyes, and then she gave them each a solid silver piece out of a purse, which, contrary to the custom of skeletons, she held ready in her hand.

* Written before recent events in France.

"Oh, thank you," says Dolly; "now I can get no end of things. There's George and Robert and——"

"It is much better to buy *one* nice thing to take care of than a great many little ones," said Rhoda, philosophically. "Dolly, you don't manage well. I don't want to get everything I see. I shall buy that pretty locket. None of the girls in my class have got one as pretty."

"Come along quick then," said Dolly, "for fear they should have sold it."

They left the Palais Royal at last and drove homewards with their treasures. Dolly never forgot that evening; the carriage drove along through the May-lit city, by teeming streets, by shady avenues, to the sounds of life and pleasure-making. Carriages were rolling along with them; long lines of trees, of people, of pavements led to a great triumphal archway, over which the little pink clouds were floating, while an intense sweet thrill of spring rung in the air and in the spirits of the people. Henriette opened the door to them when they got home.

"The poor gentleman from below," she said, "is waiting for you in the drawing-room. I told him you would not be long."

The gentleman was waiting in the drawing-room as Lady Sarah came in with the two little girls shyly following. She would have sent them away, but a sort of shyness habitual to her made her shrink from a scene or an explanation. It may have been some feeling of the same sort which had induced the widower to go away to the farthest window of the room, where he stood leaning out with his back turned for an instant after they had come in.

Coming in out of the dazzle of the streets, the old yellow drawing-room looked dark and dingy; the lights reflected from the great amphitheatre without struck on the panelled doors and fusty hangings. All these furnished houses have a family likeness: chairs with Napoleon backs and brass-bound legs, tables that cry *vive l'empire* as plain as tables can utter, old-fashioned *secrétaires* standing demure with their backs against the wall, keeping their counsel and their secrets (if there are such things as secrets). The laurel-crowned clocks tick beneath their wreaths and memorials of bygone victories, the looking-glasses placidly relate the faces, the passing figures, the varying lights and changes as they pass before them. To-night a dusky golden light was streaming into the room from behind the hills, that were heaving, so Dolly thought, and dimming the solemn glow of the sky: she saw it all in an instant; and then, with a throb she recognized this wicked husband coming from the window where he had been standing with his back to them. She had never seen him before so close, and yet she seemed to know his face. He looked very cruel, thought Dolly; he had a pale face and white set lips, and a sort of dull black gleam flashed from his eyes. He spoke in a harsh voice. He was very young—a mere boy, with thick fair hair brushed back from his haggard young face. He might have been, perhaps, about two or three-and-twenty.

"I waited for you, Lady Sarah. I came to say good-by," he said. "I am going back to London to-night. I shall never forget your——." His voice broke. "How good you have been to me," he said hoarsely, as he took the two brown hands in his and wrung them again and again.

The widow's sad face softened as she told him "to have trust, to be brave."

"You don't know what you say," he said in a common-place way. "God bless you." He was going, but seeing the two, Dolly and Rhoda, standing by the door looking at him with wondering faces, he stopped short. "I forgot," he said, still in this hard matter-of-fact voice, "I brought a cross of Emma's; I thought she would wish it. It won't bring ill-luck," he said, with a ghastly sort of laugh. "She bore crosses enough in her short life, poor soul, but this one, at least, had no nails in it. May I give it to your little girl?" he said, "unless she is afraid to take anything from me."

Lady Sarah did not say no, and the pale young man looked vaguely from one to the other of the two little girls as they stood there, and then he took one step towards Dolly, who was the biggest, and who was standing, straight and tall for her age, in her light-coloured dress, with her straw hat hanging on her arm. I don't know how to write this of my poor little heroine. If he had seemed more unhappy, if he had not looked so strangely and spoken so oddly, she might have understood him better; but as it was, she thought he was saying terrible things, laughing and jeering and heartless: so judged Dolly in an innocent severity. Is it so? Are not the children of this world wiser in their generation than the children of light? Are there not depths of sin and repentance undreamt of by the pure in spirit? One seems to grasp at a meaning which eludes one as one strains at it, wondering what is the sermon to be preached upon this text. . . . It was one that little Dolly, still playing in her childish and peaceful valley, could not understand. She might forgive as time went on; she had not lived long enough yet either to forgive or to forget; never once had it occurred to her that any thought of hers, either of blame or forgiveness, could signify to any other human being, or that any word or sign of hers could have a meaning to any one except herself.

Dolly was true to herself, and in those days she used to think that all her life long she would be always true, and always say all she felt. As life grows long, and people, living on together through time and sorrow and experience, realize more and more the complexities of their own hearts, and sympathize more and more with the failings and sorrows of others, they are apt to ask themselves with dismay if it is a reality of life to be less and less uncompromising as complexities increase, less true to themselves as they are more true to others, and if the very angels of God are wrestling and at war in their hearts. All through her life Dolly found, with a bitter experience, that these two angels of charity and of truth are often very far apart until the miracle of love comes to unite them. She was strong and true; in after days she prayed for charity; with charity

came sorrow, and doubt, and perplexity. Charity is long-suffering and kind, and thinks no evil ; but then comes truth crying out, "Is not wrong wrong ; is not falsehood a lie ?" Perhaps it is because truth is not for this life that the two are at variance, until the day shall come when the light shall come, and with the light peace and knowledge and love, and then charity itself will be no longer needed.

And so Dolly, who in those days had scarcely realized even human charity in her innocent young heart, looked up and saw the wicked man who had been so cruel to his wife coming towards her with a gift in his hand ; and as she saw him coming, black against the light of the sunset, she shrank away behind Rhoda, who stood looking up with her dark wistful eyes. The young man saw Dolly shrink from him, and he stopped short ; but at the same instant he met the tranquil glance of a trustful upturned face, and, with a sigh, he put the cross (shimmering with a sudden flash of light) into little Rhoda's soft clasping hand.

" You are not afraid, like your sister ? Will you keep it for Emma's sake ?" he said again, in a softer voice.

There was a moment's silence. Lady Sarah, never, at the best of times, a ready woman, tried to say something, but the words died away. Dolly looked up, and her eyes met the flash of the young man's two wild burning eyes. They seemed to her to speak. " I saw you shrink away," they seemed to say. " You are right ; don't come near me—don't come near me." But this was only unspoken language.

" Good-by," he said again to Lady Sarah, in a fierce sort of way, clenching his teeth. " I am glad to have seen you once more." And then he went quickly out of the room without looking back, leaving them all standing scared and saddened by this melancholy little scene.

The lights were burning deeper behind the hills ; the reflections were darker. Had there been a sudden storm ? No ; the sun had set quietly behind Montmartre, where the poor girl was lying there upon the heights above the city. Was it Dolly who was trembling, or was it the room that seemed vibrating to the echo of some disastrous chords that were still ringing in her ears.

Dolly went to the window and leant out over the wooden bar, looking down into the rustling gloomy lilac garden below. How sad the scent of the lilac-trees in flower seemed as it came flooding up ! She was still angry, but she was sorry too, and two great tears fell upon the wooden bar against which she was leaning. She always remembered that evening when she smelt lilac in flower.

Rhoda was very much pleased with her cross.

" I shall hang it on a black ribbon," said the child, " and always think of the poor gentleman when I wear it ; and I shall tell the girls in class all about him and how he gave it to me."

" How you took it from him, you mean," said Lady Sarah, shortly.

" No, indeed, Lady Sarah ; he gave it to me," cried Rhoda, clutching her treasure quite tight.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMMORTELLES.

FRANK RABAN, having left the three standing silent and sorry in the calm sunset room, ran down to his own apartment on the floor beneath. He was to go back to England that night: he felt he could not stay in that place any longer; the memories seemed to choke him, and to rise up and madden him. As he came now down the echoing stairs he heard the voices of his servants: the front door was wide open. The concierge was standing in the passage in his shirt-sleeves; M. Adolphe was discoursing; a milliner was waiting with her bill. "Not two years married," he heard them saying; "as for him, he will console himself." Their loud voices suddenly hushed as he appeared. Adolphe flung the door open still wider for his master; but the master could not face them all, with their curious eyes fixed upon him, and he turned and fled downstairs. Only two years since he had carried her away from her home in the quiet suburban cottage—poor Emma, who wanted to be married, and who had never loved him! Where was she now? Married only two years! What years! And now his remorse seemed almost greater than he could bear. He crossed the crowded road, heedless of the warning cries of the drivers, pushing his way across the stream; then he got into a deserted country close upon the bustle of the main thoroughfare (they call it Beaujon), where great walls run by lonely avenues, and great gates stand closed and barred. Would they burst open? would *she* come out with a pale avenging face and strike him? She, poor child! Whom did she ever strike in word or thought? Once he got a little ease: he thought he had been a very long way, and he had wandered at last into an ancient lane by a convent wall, beyond the modern dismal Beaujon, in the friendly older quarter. Lime-trees were planted in this tranquil place. There was a dim rain-washed painting upon the wall, a faint vista of fountains and gardens, the lilac-trees were blooming behind it, and the vesper song of the nuns reached his ears; he stood still for an instant, but the song ceased.

The old avenue led back to the great round Place in front of the Arc; for, in those days, neither the ride nor the great new roads were made which now lead thronging to the Bois. And the tide came streaming to the end of the long avenue of the Champs Elysées and no farther, and turned and ebbed away again from the gates of the Douane. Beyond them, the place was as silent and deserted as though no roar of life was swelling. The young man hurried on, not caring where he went. If I had loved her, if I had loved her—was the burthen of his remorse. It was almost heavier than he could bear. There were some children swinging on the chains that separate the great arch from the road; the last rays of the sun were lighting the stones and the gritty platform; twilight was closing in. I think if it had not been for the children, he would have

thrown himself down upon the ground. They screamed shrilly at their play, and the echo from under the great vault gave back their voices. A few listless people were standing about ; a countryman spelling out by the dying lights the pompous lists of victories that had been carved into the stone—Jena, Marengo, Austerlitz. Chiller and more death-like came the twilight creeping on : the great carved figures blew their trumpets, waved their stony laurels, of which the shadows changed so many times a day. He staggered to a bench ; he said to himself, “ I should like this Arc to fall down upon my head and crush me. I am a devil, I am not a man. I killed her with neglect, with reproach, and suspicion ! But for me she would have been alive now, smiling as when I first saw her. I will go away and never be heard of any more. Go away—how can I go from this curse ? could Cain escape ? ” Then he began to see what was all round about him again, see it distorted by his mad remorse. All the great figures seemed writhing their arms and legs ; the long lists of battle seemed like funeral processions moving round and round him, fighting and thundering and running into one another. The Arc itself was a great tomb where these legions lay buried. Was it not about to fall with a stupendous crash ; and would the dead people come rising round about at the blast of the trumpets of stone. Here was an Emperor who had wanted to conquer the whole world, and who had all but attained his object. Here was he, a man who had not striven for victory, but yielded to every temptation ; a man who had deserted his post, betrayed his trust, cursed a life that he should have cherished. Though his heart were broken on a wheel and his body racked with pain, that would not mend the past, sanctify it, and renew it again.

A sort of cold sweat lay upon his forehead ; some children were playing and had come up to the stone bench where he was sitting, and were making little heaps of dust upon it. One of them looked into his face and saw him clench his hand, and the little thing got frightened and burst out crying. The other, who was older, took the little one by the hand and led it away.

Of what good was it thinking over the past ? It was over. Emma was dead, lying up on the heights towards which Dolly had been looking from her window. He had been to blame ; but not to blame as he imagined in his mad remorse and despair. He had been careless and impatient, and hard upon her, as he was now hard upon himself. He had married her from a sense of honour, when his boyish fancy was past. His duty was too hard for him, and he had failed, and now he was free.

It was that very evening—Dolly remembered it afterwards—a letter came from her mother, written on thin lilac paper, in a large and twisted handwriting, sealed and stamped with many Indian stamps. Dolly's mother's letters always took a long time to read ; they were written up and down and on different scraps of paper. Sometimes she sent whole bouquets of faded flowers in them to the children, sometimes patterns for dresses to

be returned. Henriette brought the evening's mail in with the lamp and the tea-tray, and put the whole concern down with a clatter of cups and saucers on the table before Lady Sarah. There was also a thick blue lawyer-looking letter with a seal. The little girls peeped up shyly as Lady Sarah laid down her correspondence unopened beside her. She was a nervous woman, and afraid of unread letters: but after a little she opened the lilac epistle, and then began to flush, and turned eagerly to the second.

"Who is that from?" Dolly asked at last. "Is it from Captain Palmer?"

Her aunt laid one thin brown hand upon the letter, and went on pouring out the tea without speaking. Rhoda looked for a moment, and then stooped over her work once more. Long years afterwards the quiet atmosphere of that lamp-lit room used to come round about Dolly again. The log fire flamed, the clock ticked on. How still it was! the leaves of her book scraped as she turned them, and Rhoda stuck her silken stitches. The roll of the carriages was so far away that it sounded like a distant sea. They were still sitting silent, and Dolly was wondering whether she might speak of the letter again and of its contents, when there came an odd muffled sound of voices and exclamations from the room underneath.

"Listen!" said Rhoda.

"What can it be?" said Dolly, shutting up her book and starting up from her chair as Henriette appeared at the door, with her white cap-strings flying, breathless.

"They were all disputing downstairs," she said. "Persons had arrived that evening. It was terrible to hear them."

Lady Sarah impatiently sent Henriette about her business, and the sounds died away, and the little girls were sent off to bed. In the morning, her aunt's eyes were so red that Dolly felt sure she must have been crying. Henriette told them that the gentleman was gone. "Milady had been sent for before he left: she had lent him some money," said Henriette, "and paid the milliner's bill;" but the strange people who had come had remained. The lady had been packing up and carrying off everything, to Julie's disgust. "A great stout lady and a little gentleman," said Henriette—connections she imagined.

Events and emotions come very rarely alone, they fly in troops, like the birds. It was that very day that Lady Sarah told Dolly that she had had some bad news—she had lost a great deal of money. An Indian bank had failed in which they all had a share.

"Your mamma writes in great trouble," said Lady Sarah, reading out from a lilac scrap. "'Tell my precious Dolly that this odious bank will interfere once more with my heart's longing to see her. Captain Palmer insists upon a cruel delay. I am not strong enough to travel round the Cape, as he proposes. You, dear Sarah, might be able to endure such fatigue; but I, alas! have not the power. Once more my return is delayed.'"

"Oh, Aunt Sarah, will she ever come?" said Dolly, struggling not to

cry. . . . Dolly only cheered up when she remembered that they were ruined. She had forgotten it, in her disappointment, about her mother. "Are we really ruined?" she said, more hopefully. "We should not have spent that money yesterday. Shall we have to leave Church House? Poor mamma! Poor Aunt Sarah!"

"Poor Marker is most to be pitied," said Lady Sarah, "for we shall have to be very careful, and keep fewer maids, and wear out all our old dresses; but we need not leave Church House, Dolly."

"Then it is nothing after all," said Dolly, again disappointed. "I thought we should have had to go away and keep a shop, and that I should have worked for you. I should like to be your support in your old age and mamma's too."

Then Lady Sarah suddenly caught Dolly in her arms, and held her tight for a moment—quite tight to her heart, that was beating tumultuously.

The next time Rhoda came out of her school for a day's holiday, Lady Sarah took the little girls to a flower-shop hard by. In the window shone a lovely rainbow of sun-rays and flowers: inside the shop were glass globes and china pots, great white sprays of lilacs, lilies, violets, ferns, and hyacinths, and golden bells, stuck into emerald-blue vases, all nodding their fragrant heads. Lady Sarah bought a great bunch of violets, and two yellow garlands made of dried immortelles.

"Do you know where we are going?" she asked.

Dolly didn't answer; she was sniffing, with her face buried in a green pot of mignonette.

"May I carry the garlands?" said Rhoda, raising her great round eyes. "I know we are going to the poor lady's grave."

Then they got into the carriage, and it rolled off towards the heights.

They went out beyond the barriers of the town by dusty roads, with acacia-trees; they struggled up a steep hill, and stopped at last at the gate of the cemetery. All round about it there were stalls, with more wreaths and chaplets to sell, and little sacred images for the mourners to buy for the adornment of the graves. Children were at play, and birds singing, and the sunlight streamed bright. Dolly cried out in admiration of the winding walks, shaded with early green, the flowers blooming, the tombs and the garlands, and the epitaphs, with their notes of exclamation. She began reading them out, and calling out so loudly that her aunt had to tell her to be quiet. Then Dolly was silent for a little, but she could not help it. The sun shone, the flowers were so bright; sunshine, spring-time, sweet flowers, all made her tipsy with delight; the thought of the kind, pretty lady, who had never passed her without a smile, did not make her sad just then, but happy. She ran away for a little while, and went to help some children, who were picking daisies and tying them by a string.

When she came back, a little sobered down, she found that her aunt had scattered the violets over a new-made grave, and little Rhoda had hung the yellow wreath on the cross at its head.

Dolly was silent, then, for a minute, and stood, looking from her aunt,

as she stood straight and grey before her, to little Rhoda, whose eyes were full of tears. What was there written on the cross ?—

TO EMMA,
THE WIFE OF FRANCIS RABAN,
AND ONLY DAUGHTER OF DAVID PENFOLD, OF EARLSCOURT,
IN THE PARISH OF KENSINGTON.
DIED MARCH 20, 18—. AGED 22.

“Aunt Sarah,” Dolly cried, suddenly, seizing her aunt’s gown, “tell me, was that young Mr. Raban from John Morgan’s house and Emma from the cottage ? When he looked at me once I thought I knew him, only I didn’t know who he could be.”

“Yes, my dear,” said Lady Sarah ; “I did not suppose that you would remember them.”

“I remembered,” said Rhoda, nodding her head ; “but I thought you did not wish me to say so.”

“Why not ?” asked Lady Sarah. “You are always imagining things, Rhoda. I had forgotten all about them myself ; I had other things on my mind at the time they married,” and she sighed and looked away.

“It was when Dolly’s papa——” Rhoda began.

“Mr. Raban reminded me of Kensington before he left,” said Lady Sarah, hastily, in her short voice. “I was able to help him, foolish young man. It is all very sad, and he is very unhappy and very much to blame.”

“Is he ?” said Dolly, and then she walked away quietly ; but before they got to the carriage she was at her rigs again.

This was their only visit to poor Emma Raban’s grave. A few days after, Lady Sarah, in her turn, left Paris, and took Dolly and little Rhoda, whose schooling was over, home to England. Rhoda was rather sorry to be dropped at home at the well-known door in Old Street, where she lived with her Aunt Morgan. Yes, it would open in a minute, and all her old life would begin again. Tom and Joe and Cassie were behind it, with their loud voices. Dolly envied her ; it seemed to her to be a noisy elysium of welcoming exclamations into which Rhoda disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOW-WINDOWED HOUSE.

RHODA, as she sat at her work, used to peep out of the bow-windows at the people passing up and down the street—a pretty girlish head, with thick black plaits pinned away, and a white frill round the slender throat. Sometimes, when Mrs. Morgan was out, Rhoda would untwist and unpin, and shake down a cloud upon her shoulders ; then her eyes would gleam with a wild wilful light, as she looked at herself in the little glass in the workbox, but she would run away if she heard any one coming, and hastily plait up her coils. The plain-speaking and rough-dealing of a household not attuned to the refinements of more sensitive natures had frightened

instead of strengthening hers. She had learnt to be afraid and reserved. She was timid and determined, but things had gone wrong with her, and she was neither brave nor frightened in the right way. She had learnt to think for herself, to hold her own secretly against the universal encroachments of a lively race. She was obliging, and ready to sacrifice her own for others, but when she gave up, she was conscious of the sacrifice. She could forgive her brother unto seven times. She was like the disciple, whose sympathy did not reach unto seventy times seven.

Rhoda was not strong, like Cassie and Zoe. She was often tired, as she sat there in the window-corner. She could not always touch the huge smoking heaps that came to table. When all the knives and forks and voices clattered together, they seemed to go through her head. The bells and laughter made her start. She would nervously listen for the boys' feet clattering down the stairs. At Church House there was a fresh silence. You could hear the birds chirruping in the garden all the time Lady Sarah was reading aloud. There were low comfortable seats covered with faded old chintz and tapestry. There were Court ladies hanging on the walls. One wore a pearl necklace ; she had dark bright eyes, and Rhoda used to look at her, and think her like herself, and wonder. There were books to read and times to read them at Church House, and there was Dolly always thinking how to give Rhoda pleasure. If she exacted a certain fealty and obedience from the little maiden, her rule was different from Aunt Morgan's. Dolly had no sheets to sew, no dusty cupboards to put straight, no horrible boys' shirts to front or socks to darn and darn and darn, while their owners were disporting themselves out of doors, and making fresh work for the poor little Danaides at home.

To Dolly, Old Street seemed a delightful place. She never could understand why Rhoda was so unhappy there. It seemed to Dolly only too delightful, for George was for ever going there when he was at home. The stillness of Church House, its tranquil order and cheerful depression, used to weary the boy ; perhaps it was natural enough. Unless, as Rhoda was, they are constitutionally delicate, boys and girls don't want to bask all day long like jelly-fish in a sunny calm ; they want to tire themselves, to try their lungs ; noise and disorder are to them like light and air, wholesome tonics with which they brace themselves for the coming struggles of life. Later in life there are sometimes quite old girls and boys whose vitality cannot be repressed. They go up mountains and drive steam-engines. They cry out in print, since it would no longer be seemly for them to shriek at the pitch of their voices, or to set off running violently, or to leap high in the air.

"The Morgans" certainly meant plenty of noise and cheerful clatter, the short tramp of schoolboy feet, huge smoking dishes liberally dispensed. John Morgan would rush in pale, breathless, and over-worked ; in a limp white neckcloth as befitting his calling, he would utter a breathless blessing on the food, and begin hastily to dispense the smoking heap before him.

"Take care, John dear," cries Mrs. Morgan.
"What? where?" says John. "Why, George! come to lunch?
Just in time."

It was in John Morgan's study that George established himself after luncheon. The two windows stood open as far as the old-fashioned sashes would go. The vine was straggling across the panes, wide-spreading its bronzed and shining leaves. The sunlight dazzled through the green, making a pleasant flicker on the walls of the shabby room, with its worn carpet and old-fashioned cane chairs and deal book-cases.

A door opened into an inner room, through which George, by leaning forward from his arm-chair behind the door, can see Mrs. Morgan's cap-ribbons all on end against the cross-light in the sitting-room windows. Cassie is kneeling on the floor, surrounded by piles of garments; while her brother, standing in the middle of the room, is rapidly checking off a list of various ailments and misfortunes that are to be balanced in the scales of fate by proportionate rolls of flannel and calico. Good little Cassie Morgan feels never a moment's doubt as she piles her heaps—so much sorrow, so many petticoats; so much hopeless improvidence, so many pounds of tea and a coal-ticket. In cases of confirmed wickedness, she adds an illuminated text sometimes, and a hymn-book. Do they ever come up, these hymn-books and bread-tickets cast upon the waters? Is it so much waste of time and seed? After all, people can but work in their own way, and feel kindly towards their fellow-creatures. One seed is wasted, another grows up; as the buried flora of a country starts into life when the fields are ploughed in after years.

"Go on, Cassie," says Mrs. Morgan: "Bonker—Wickens—Costello."
"Costello is again in trouble," says John. "It is too bad of him, with that poor wife of his and all those children. I have to go round to the Court about him now. Tell George I shall be back in ten minutes."

"I have kept some clothes for them," said Cassie. "They are such nice little children," and she looks up flushed and all over ravellings at the relenting curate, who puts Mrs. Costello down in his relief-book.

All over John Morgan's study, chairs and tables, such books are lying, with pamphlets, blue books, black books, rolls and registers, in confusion, and smelling of tobacco.

In this age of good reports and evil reports people seem like the two boys in Dickens's story, who felt when they had docketed their bills that they were as good as paid. So we classify our wrongs and tie up our miseries with red tape; we pity people by decimals, and put our statistics away with satisfied consciences. John Morgan wrote articles from a cold and lofty point of view, but he left his reports about all over the room, and would rush off to the help of any human being, deserving or undeserving. He had a theory that Heaven had created individuals as well as classes; and at this very moment, with another bang of the door, he was on his way to the police-court, to say a good word for the intemperate Costello, who was ruefully awaiting his trial in the dark cell below.

George, although comfortably established in the Morgan study, was also tired of waiting, and found the house unusually dull. For some time past he had been listening to a measured creaking noise in the garden; then came a peal of bells from the steeple; and he went to the window and looked out. The garden was full of weeds and flowers, with daisies on the lawn, and dandelions and milkwort among the beds. It was not trimly kept, like the garden at home; but George, who was the chief gardener, thought it a far pleasanter place, with its breath of fresh breeze, and its bit of blue over-roof. For flowers, there were blush-roses, nailed against the wall, that Rhoda used to wear in her dark hair sometimes, when there were no earwigs in them; and blue flags, growing in the beds among spiked leaves, and London pride, and Cape jessamine, very sweet upon the air, and also ivy, creeping in a tangle of leaves and tendrils. The garden had been planted by the different inhabitants of the old brown house—each left a token. There was a medlar-tree, with one rotten medlar upon a branch, beneath which John Morgan would sit and smoke his pipe in the sun, while his pupils construed Greek upon the little lawn. Only Carlo was there now, stretching himself comfortably in the dry grass (Carlo was one of Bunch's puppies, grown up to be of a gigantic size and an unknown species). Tom Morgan's tortoise was also basking upon the wall. The creaking noise went on after the chimes had ceased, and George jumped out of window on to the water-butt to see what was the matter. He had forgotten the swing. It hung from a branch of the medlar-tree to the trellis, and a slim figure, in a limp cotton dress, stood clinging to the rope—a girl with a black cloud of hair falling about her shoulders. George stared in amazement. Rhoda had stuck some vine-leaves in her hair, and had made a long wreath, that was hanging from the swing, and that floated as she floated. She was looking up with great wistful eyes, and for a minute she did not see him. As the swing rose and fell, her childish wild head went up above the wall and the branches against the blue, and down "upon a background of pure gold," where the Virginian creeper had turned in the sun. George thought it was a sort of tune she was swinging, with all those colours round about her in the sultry summer day. As he leaped down, a feeling came over him as if it had all happened before, as if he had seen it and heard the creaking of the ropes in a dream. Rhoda blushed and slackened her flight. He seemed still to remember it all while the swing stopped by degrees; and a voice within the house began calling, "Rhoda! Rhoda!"

"Oh! I must go," said Rhoda, sighing. "I am wasting my time. Please don't tell Aunt Morgan I was swinging."

"Tell her!" said George. "What a silly child you are. Why shouldn't you swing?"

"Oh! she would be angry," said Rhoda, looking down. "I am very silly. I can't bear being scolded."

"Can't you?" says George, with his hands in his pockets. "I'm used to it, and don't mind a bit."

"I shouldn't mind it if . . . if I was you, and any one cared for me," said Rhoda, with tearful eyes. She spoke in a low depressed voice.

"Nonsense," said George; "everybody cares for everybody. Dolly loves you, so—so do we all."

"Do you?" said Rhoda, looking at him in a strange wistful way, and brightening suddenly, and putting back all her cloudy hair with her hands. Then she blushed up, and ran into the house.

When George told Dolly about it, Dolly was very sympathizing, except that she said Rhoda ought to have answered when her aunt called her.

"She is too much afraid of being scolded," said Dolly.

"Poor little thing!" said George. "Listen to this," and he sat down to the piano. He had made a little tune he called "The Swing," with a minor accompaniment recurring again and again, and a pretty modulation.

"It is exactly like a swing," said Dolly. "George, you must have a cathedral some day, and make them sing all the services through."

"I shall not be a clergyman," said George, gravely. "It is all very well for Morgan, who is desperately in love. He has often told me that it would be his ruin if he were separated from Mrs. Carbury."

George, during his stay in Old Street (he had boarded there for some weeks during Lady Sarah's absence), had been installed general confidante and sympathiser, and was most deeply interested in the young couple's prospects.

"I believe Aunt Sarah has got a living when old Mr. Livermore dies," he went on, shutting up the piano and coming to the table where Dolly was drawing. "We must get her to present it to John Morgan."

"But she always says it is for you, George, now that the money is lost," said Dolly. "I am afraid it will not be any use asking her. George, how much is prudent?"

"How much is how much?" says George, looking with his odd blue eyes.

"I meant prudent to marry on?" says Dolly.

"Oh, I don't know," says George, indifferently. "I shall marry on anything I may happen to have."

"What are you children talking about?" said Lady Sarah, looking up from her corner by the farthest chimney-piece. She liked one particular place by the fire, from which she could look down the room at the two heads that were bending together over the round table, and out into the garden, where a west wind was blowing, and tossing clouds and ivy sprays.

"We are talking about prudence in marriage," says George.

"How can you be so silly!" says Lady Sarah, sharply. At which George starts up offended and marches through the window into the garden.

"What is it?" said the widow. "Yes, Dolly, go to him," she said, in answer to Dolly's pleading eyes. "Foolish boy!"

The girl was already gone. Her aunt watched the white figure, flying with wind-blown locks and floating skirts along the ivy wall. Dolly caught her brother up by the speckled holly-tree, and the two went on together, proceeding in step to a triumphant music of sparrows overhead, a wavering of ivy along their path ; soft winds blew everywhere, scattering light leaves ; the summer's light was in the day, and shining from the depth of Dolly's grey eyes. The two went and sat down on the beach by the pond, the old stone-edged pond, that reflected scraps of the blue green overhead ; a couple of gold-fishes alternately darted from side to side. George forgot that he was not understood as he sat there throwing pebbles into the water. Presently the wind brought some sudden voices close at hand, and, looking up, they saw two people advancing from the house, Robert Henley walking by Lady Sarah and carrying her old umbrella.

"Oh, he is always coming," said George, kicking his heels, and not seeming surprised. "He is staying with his grandmother at the palace, but they don't give him enough to eat, and so he drops in to the Morgans', and now he comes here."

"Hush!" said Dolly, looking round.

Robert Henley was a tall, handsome young fellow, about twenty, with a straight nose and a somewhat pompous manner. He was very easy and good-natured when it was not too much trouble ; he would patronize people both younger and older than himself with equally good intentions. George's early adoration for his cousin I fear is now tinged with a certain jealousy of which Robert is utterly unconscious ; he takes the admiration for granted. He comes up and gives Dolly an affable kiss. "Well, Dolly, have you learnt to talk French ? I want to hear all about Paris."

"What shall I tell you ?" says simple Dolly, greatly excited. "We had such a pretty drawing-room, Robert, with harps on all the doors, and yellow sofas, and such a lovely, lovely view." And Lady Sarah smiled at Dolly's enthusiasm, and asked Robert if he could stay to dinner.

"I shall be delighted," says Robert, just like a man of the world. "My grandmother has turned me out for the day."

CHAPTER X.

A SNOW GARDEN.

Is it that evening or another that they were all assembled in the little bow-windowed drawing-room in Old Street listening to one of Rhoda's interminable "pieces" that she learnt at her French school ? And then came a quartette, but she broke down in the accompaniment, and George turned her off the music-stool.

The doors were open into John's inner room, from which came a last western gleam of light through the narrow windows, and beyond the

medlar-tree. It would have been dark in the front room but for those western windows. In one of them sat Lady Sarah leaning back in John's old leatheren chair, sitting and listening with her hands lying loosely crossed in her lap ; as she listened to the youthful din of music and voices and the strumming piano and the laughter. She had come by Dolly's special request. Her presence was considered an honour by Mrs. Morgan, but an effort at the same time. In her endeavours to entertain her guest, Mrs. Morgan, bolt upright in another corner, had fallen asleep, and was nodding her head in this silent inner room. There was noise and to spare in the front room, people in the street outside stopped to listen to the music.

When George began to play it seemed another music altogether coming out of the old cracked yellow piano ; smash, bang, crack, he flew at it, thumping the keys, missing half the notes, sometimes jumbling the accompaniment, but seizing the tune and spirit of the music with a genuine feeling that was irresistible.

"Now all together," cried George, getting excited.

It was an arrangement of one of Mendelssohn's four-part songs. "As pants the hart," sang Rhoda, shrill and sweet, leading the way. "As pants the hart," sang George, with a sort of swing. "As pants the hart," sang Dolly, carefully and restrainedly. She sang with great precision for a child of her age, quietly, steadily ; but even her brother's enthusiasm did not inspire her. George flung his whole impulse into his music, and banged a chord at her in indignation at her tameness. John Morgan piped away with a face of the greatest seriousness, following his pupil's lead ; he had much respect for George's musical capabilities. Cassie and Zoe sang one part together, and now and then Robert Henley came out with a deep trumpet-like note, placing it when he saw an opportunity. Dolly laughed the first time, but Rhoda's dark eyes were raised admiringly. So they all stood in the twilight, nodding their heads and clearing their voices, happy and harmlessly absorbed. They might have stood for a choir of angels ; any one of the old Italian masters might have painted them as they sang, with the addition of lilies and wings, and gold glories, and the little cherubim who seemed to have flitted quite innocently out of ancient mythologies into the *Legende Dorée* of our own days ; indifferently holding the music for a St. Cecilia, or the looking-glass for the Mother of Love.

Dolly, with her flowing locks, stood like a little rigid Raphael maiden, with eyes steadily fixed upon her scroll. Rhoda blushed, and shrilled and brightened. How well a golden glory would have become her dark cloudy hair.

As the room darkened Cassie set some lights, and they held them to read their music by. George kept them all at work, and gave no respite except to Rhoda, whose feelings he feared he had hurt. "Please come and turn over my music, Rhoda," he said. "Dolly's not half quick enough."

He had found some music in an old box at home the day before, some old-fashioned glees, with a faded and flourishing dedication to the Right Honourable the Countess of Churchtown, and then in faint ink, S. C. 1799.

It was easy music, and they all got on well enough, picking out the notes. Lady Sarah could remember her mother playing that same old ballad of "Ye gentlemen of England" when she was herself quite a little girl. One old tune after another came, and mingled with Mrs. Morgan's sleeping, Lady Sarah's waking dreams of the past that was her own, and of the future that was to be for others ; as the tunes struck upon her ear, they seemed to her like the new lives all about her repeating the old notes with fresh voices and feelings. George was in high good humour, behaving very well until Robert displeased him by taking somebody else's part ; the boy stopped short, and there might have been some discussion, but Mrs. Morgan's fat maid came in with the tray of gingerbread nuts, and the madeira and orange wine, that the hospitable old lady delighted to dispense, and set it down with a jingle in the back-room where the elder ladies were sitting.

This gingerbread tray was the grand closing scene of the entertainment, and Robert affably handed the wine-glasses, and John Morgan, seizing the gingerbread nuts, began scattering them all about the room as he forced them upon his unwilling guests. He had his sermon to finish for the next day, and he did not urge them to remain. There was a little chattering in the hall : Dolly was tied up and kissed and tucked up in her shawl ; Lady Sarah donned a capoche (as I think she called it) ; they stepped out into the little star-lit street, of which the go-to-bed lights were already burning in the upper windows. Higher still was Orion and his mighty company, looking down upon the humble illumination of the zig-zag roofs. The door of the bow-windowed house opened to let out the voices. "Good-night," cried everybody, and then the door closed and all was silent again, except for the footsteps travelling down the street.

"Do you ever think of all the people lying out flat in long rows as you go along at night ?" George was saying to Dolly—"I do."

"Like nine-pins," said Robert, offering his arm to Lady Sarah. That lady pushed it impatiently away. There was nothing annoyed her so much as little unnecessary attentions. So Henley, repulsed, fell back and came along the middle of the road with the other two, who began asking him how long he was to be in town.

Fifteen or twenty years ago, as I have said, Dolly Vanborough and the other ladies and gentlemen her contemporaries were not the respectable middle-aged people they are now, but for the most part foolish young folks just beginning their lives, looking out upon the world with respectful eyes, arrogant,—perhaps dogmatic, uncertain,—but with a larger belief, perhaps a more heroic desire, than exists among them now. To-day, for a good

many of them, expediency seems a great discovery, and the stone that is to turn everything to gold. Take things as you find them, do so and so, not because you feel inclined, or because it is right and generous, but because the neighbours are looking on, it is expected of you ; and then, with our old friend the donkey-man, we stagger off, carrying the ass upon our shoulders. I suppose it is a law of nature that the horizon should lower as we climb down the hill of life, only some people look upwards always, "And stumble among the briars and tumble into the well." This is true enough, as regards my heroine, who was often in trouble, often disappointed, ashamed, angry, but who will persist in her star-gazing to the end of her journey.

When Dolly was nearly fifteen, her brother George was eighteen, and had just gone to college, starting in high spirits, and with visions of all the letters of the alphabet before him, and many other honourable distinctions. Dolly, dazzled, helped to pack his portmanteau.

"O, I wish I was going too ! " Dolly said ; " girls never do anything, or go anywhere."

"Mamma wants you to go to India," said George.

"But the Admiral won't have me," says Dolly ; "he wrote to Aunt Sarah about it, and said they were coming home. Are you going to take all these pipes and French novels ? "

"I can never study without a pipe," said George ; "and I must keep up my French."

Dolly and Lady Sarah were disappointed when George, notwithstanding these appliances for study, returned without any special distinctions. The first Christmas that he came back, he brought Robert Henley with him. The old grandmother in the Palace was dead, and the young man had no longer a lodgings in Kensington. The two arrived after dinner, and found Lady Sarah established by the fire in the oak parlour. They had come up driving through a fierce Christmas wind from the station, and were glad of Dolly's welcome and comfortable cups of tea.

When Dolly awoke next morning up in her little room, the whole country was white with snow. The iron wind was gone, the rigid breath of winter had sobbed itself away, the soft new-fallen snow lay heaped on the fields and the hedges, on the fir-trees and laurels. Dolly ran to the window. George and Robert were out in the garden already. Overhead was a blue, high heaven ; the white snow-country she could see through her window was sparkling and dazzling white. Sharp against the heavens stood the delicate branches of the trees, prismatic lights were radiating from the sloping lawns, a light veil of falling drift wreathed the distant coppices ; and Dolly running downstairs soon after, found the dining-room empty, except for the tea-pot, and she carried her breakfast to the window. She had scarcely finished when George and Robert both came tapping at the pane.

"Come out," cried George.

"Let her finish her breakfast," said Robert.

"I've done," cried Dolly gaily jumping up and running to fetch her hat and her coat, and to tie up her long skirts. Dolly possessed a warm fur cloak, which had been Lady Sarah's once, in the days of her prosperity, and which became the girl so well that her aunt liked her to wear it. Henley, standing by a frozen cabbage in the kitchen-garden, watched her approvingly as she came along the snowy path. All her brown furs were glistening comfortably ; the scarlet feather in her hat had caught the light and reflected it on her hair.

Dolly's hair was very much the colour of seal-skin, two-coloured, the hollows of its rippling locks seemed dark, while the crests shone like gold. There was something autumnal in her colours. Dolly's was a brilliant russet autumn, with grey skies and red berries and warm lights. She had tied a scarlet kerchief round her neck, but the snow did not melt for all her bright colours. How pretty it was ! leaves lying crisped and glittering upon the white foaming heaps, tiny tracks here and there crossing the pathways, and then the bird-steps, like chainlets lightly laid upon the smooth, white field. Where the sun had melted the snow in some sheltered corner some red-breasts were hopping and bobbing ; the snow-sheets glittered, lying heavy on the laurel leaves on the low fruit walls.

Robert watched her coming, with her honest, smiling face. She stopped at the end of the walk to clear away a corner of the bed, where a little colony of snowdrops were crushed by a tiny avalanche that had fallen upon their meek heads. It was the work of an instant, but in that instant Dolly's future fate was decided.

For, as my heroine comes advancing unconscious through this snow and diamond morning, Henley thinks that is the realization of a dream he has sometimes dreamt, and that the mistress of his future home stands there before him, bright and bonnie, handsome and outspoken. Dorothy rules him with the ascendancy of a youthful, indifferent heart, strong in its own reliance and hope ; and yet this maiden is not the person that she thinks herself, nor is she the person that Henley thinks her. She is strong, but with an artificial strength not all her own ; strong in the love of those round about her, strong in youth and in ignorance of evil.

They walked together down the garden walks and out into the lanes, and home again across the stile. "Dolly," said Robert, as they were going in, "I shall not forget our morning's expedition together—will you, too, promise me—" He stopped short. "What are those?" he said, sentimentally ; "snowdrops?" and he stooped to pick one or two. Dolly also turned away. "Here is something that will remind you—" Robert began.

"And you," cried Dolly, flinging a great snow heap suddenly into his face and running away. It was very babyish and vulgar, but Robert looked so solemn that she could not resist the impulse. He walked back to the house greatly offended.

A Giant Planet.

DURING the present month an evening star, which some may mistake for the planet of love, will adorn the western skies for several hours after sunset. This orb is not, however, the true Hesperus, nor does it shine with equal lustre. It is the noble planet Jupiter, the giant of the solar system, itself the centre of a system of orbs whose movements, under the mighty influence of their ruling centre, resemble in regularity the motions of the planets round the sun. We propose to give a brief sketch of what is known respecting this planet, the only member of the solar system,—or rather of the better known part of that scheme,—which chances, at the present time, to be well placed for observation. Much has been discovered during the last few years,—nay, even during the last few months,—to render such a sketch interesting.

We must, in the first place, dispossess ourselves of the notion, not uncommonly entertained, that Jupiter is one of a family of orbs, nearly equal in dignity and importance, and comprising the Earth and Venus, Mars and Mercury, among its members. This idea still prevails, because in our books on astronomy we commonly see a set of concentric circles at regularly increasing distances, assigned as the paths of the several planets of the solar system. And besides, there yet remains in the modern teaching of astronomy a perceptible trace of the ancient astronomical systems, in which Saturn and Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, played parts of equal importance.

Let it be carefully remembered, then, that the four planets which circle nearest to the sun,—the family of which our earth is a member,—differ in all their characteristics from the outer family (also consisting of four planets) to which Jupiter belongs. The whole of the inner family—the whole of the space within which its members travel—could be placed between the paths of Jupiter and his next neighbour Saturn, with a clear space many millions of miles wide on either side. The actual area between the paths of Jupiter and Saturn exceeds nearly thirty times the whole area within which the four lesser planets pursue their paths. And when we consider the dimensions of the four inner planets we find a like disproportion. Four circles representing these orbs can be enclosed within a circle representing Uranus, the smallest of the four outer planets; yet even this circumstance does not adequately represent the enormous disparity between the two families of planets; for, in fact, the volume of Uranus exceeds the combined volume of all the inner planets upwards of thirty times. We might adduce many other illustrations of the complete dissimilarity between the inner and outer families of planets; but what has

been already stated will suffice for our present purpose. It will be evident that in considering the members of one or other family, we must be prepared to meet with relations which differ not merely in degree, but in kind. We may thus, at the outset, dismiss from our thoughts the idea that the planet Jupiter is necessarily to be regarded as an inhabited world merely because the only planet we are actually acquainted with is inhabited. The latter circumstance may be an excellent reason for regarding Mars or Venus as the abode of life; but the analogy can no more be extended to Jupiter than to the fixed stars, which certainly are not inhabited worlds. We must, in fact, consider the physical habitudes of Jupiter independently of all conceptions based upon terrestrial analogies. Studied thus, he will be found, as we conceive, to hold a position in the scheme of creation differing considerably from that which has been assigned to him, until of late, in treatises on astronomy.

It is necessary briefly to state the dimensions, mass, and general characteristics of the planet, before proceeding to discuss its probable physical condition.

Jupiter has a diameter exceeding the earth's rather more than ten times, and a volume exceeding hers 1,230 times. It is not far from the truth to say that Jupiter's dimensions exceed the earth's in very nearly the same degree that those of the sun exceed Jupiter's. But his mass, though gigantic compared with the earth's, does not altogether correspond to his bulk, for it exceeds the mass of the earth only three hundred times. So that, if the disc our astronomers see and measure, actually represents the true globe of the planet, his substance must be, on the average, much less dense than that of the earth. In fact, while the earth's density is nearly six times as great as that of water, the density of Jupiter (*thus judged*) would exceed that of water by barely one-third. This vast globe rotates in less than ten hours on an axis nearly upright or square to the level in which the planet travels. This rapidity of rotation,—so great that points on the planet's equator travel twenty-seven times as fast as points on the terrestrial equator,—results in a considerable flattening of the planet's globe; insomuch that the polar diameter is less than the equatorial by about a twelfth part, or by fully 7,000 miles. And it may be remarked in passing, that this circumstance—the fact, namely, that the poles of the planet are drawn in, as it were, 3,500 miles as compared with the equatorial regions, or 1,750 miles as compared with the mid-latitudes in either hemisphere,—affords a striking illustration of the enormous amount of energy really represented by the rotation of Jupiter. It may also be added that the velocity with which points on Jupiter's equatorial zone are carried round, exceeds the corresponding velocity in the case of all the planets in the solar system, and is nearly six times greater than the equatorial velocity of the sun himself. It amounts, in fact, to about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles per second!

We do not propose to consider here at any length the system of satellites over which Jupiter bears sway; but this preliminary sketch

would be incomplete without a few words on the subject. It is worthy of notice that although our earth in some sort resembles the outer planets in being accompanied by a satellite, yet the relation which our moon bears to the earth is altogether different from that which the satellites of the outer planets bear to their respective primaries. Our moon is by no means a minute body by comparison with the earth, and compared with Mars or Mercury she may be regarded as having very respectable dimensions. We may, indeed, look upon the moon as a fifth member of the inner family of planets,—a member inferior to the rest, doubtless, but still not so far inferior to Mercury as Mercury is inferior to the earth. In the case of the outer planets, however, and especially in Jupiter's case, moons hold an utterly subordinate position. Taking the accepted measurements, we find the largest of Jupiter's moons less than the 16,000th part of its primary as respects bulk, while its mass or weight is less than the 11,000th part of Jupiter's.* So that these orbs may fairly be regarded as bearing the same relation to their primary that Jupiter himself bears to his primary,—the sun. It will be seen presently that this consideration is an important one.

But the great interest of the study of Jupiter resides in the fact that being the nearest of the outer family of planets, the aspect of his globe supplies the best available means for determining the condition of the giant orbs constituting that family.

The first feature which strikes us in the telescopic aspect of the planet is the presence of a series of belts, lying parallel to the planet's equator. Usually the equatorial regions are occupied by a broad bright belt, of a creamy white colour, and bordered on the north and south by copper-coloured belts. Beyond these, again, lie alternate bright and dark belts, the dark belts growing more and more bluish in hue as the pole is approached,—while the poles themselves are usually of a somewhat decided blue colour in telescopes adapted to display such features to advantage. There are commonly two or three dark belts on each hemisphere.

Now, before inquiring into the peculiarities presented by these belts, and into the remarkable changes which have been noted lately in their general aspect, it may be well for us to consider briefly what such belts seem to imply. That they are due to peculiarities in the planet's atmosphere is admitted on all hands. And it has been usual to compare them with the trade-wind zones and the great equatorial calm zone on our earth. The bright belts according to this view, are regarded as zones where for the time clouds are prevalent, the dark belts being regions where the comparatively dark hues of the planet's surface are brought into view. And

* It is not uncommonly stated in our text-books of astronomy, that the density of Jupiter's moons is far less than Jupiter's density; and Lardner goes so far as to say that "the density of the matter composing these satellites is much smaller than that of any other body of the system whose density is known." But this is a mistake. All the satellites, save one, are of greater density than Jupiter, and that one—the innermost—is denser than Saturn, Uranus, or Neptune.

then it has been deemed sufficient to point out, that the parallelism of the zones is due to the extreme rapidity of the planet's rotation.

But setting aside the fact that the trade-wind zones and the great equatorial calm zone on our earth are, in reality, little better than meteorological myths, it must be regarded as a remarkable fact that, in the case of a planet so far away from the sun as Jupiter is, there should be a supply of clouds so abundant as to form belts discernible from the earth. Jupiter is rather more than five times farther from the sun than the earth is, and receives from him about one twenty-seventh part of the light and heat which falls upon the earth (equal surface for equal surface). Making every allowance for the possibility pointed out by Professor Tyndall, that some quality in Jupiter's atmosphere may prevent the solar heat from escaping, and so cause the climate of the planet to be not very different from the earth's, yet the direct heat falling on the planet's oceans cannot be increased in this way—nay, it must be rather diminished. It chances, indeed, that the very quality by which the earth's atmosphere retains the solar heat is unquestionably possessed by Jupiter's atmosphere. When our air is full of aqueous vapour (invisible to the eye) the escape of heat is prevented, as Tyndall has shown, and thus the nights are warmer than where the air is dry. Now in Jupiter's atmosphere there is much water, for observers armed with that wonderful instrument, the spectroscope, have recognised the very same dark bands upon the spectrum of the planet which appear in the solar spectrum when the sun is low down, and therefore shining through the lower and denser atmospheric strata. The spectroscopist knows that these bands are due to the aqueous vapour in the air, because Janssen saw the very same bands when he examined the spectrum of a powerful light shining through tubes filled with steam. So that there is the vapour of water—and that, too, in enormous quantities—in the atmosphere of Jupiter. But though we thus recognise the very quality necessary for an atmosphere which is to retain the solar heat, our difficulty is not a whit lessened; for it is as difficult to understand how the invisible aqueous vapour finds its way thus into the planet's atmosphere, as to understand how the great cloud-masses are formed.

Aqueous vapour in the atmosphere, whether its presence is rendered sensible to the sight or not, implies the action of heat. Other things being equal, the greater the heat the greater the quantity of watery vapour in the air. In the summer, for instance—though many imagine the contrary—there is much more of such vapour in the air than there is in winter, the greater heat of the air enabling it to keep a greater quantity of the vapour in the invisible form. In winter, clouds are more common, and the air seems moister; yet, in reality, the quantity of aqueous vapour is reduced. Now it cannot but be regarded as a remarkable circumstance that, though the sun supplies Jupiter with only one twenty-seventh part of the heat which we receive, there should yet be raised from the oceans of Jupiter such masses of clouds as to form veritable zones; and that, moreover, *above* these clouds there should be so large a quantity

of invisible aqueous vapour that the spectroscopist can recognise the bands of this vapour in the planet's spectrum.

Even more perplexing is the circumstance that the cloud-masses should form themselves into zones. We cannot get rid of this difficulty by a mere reference to the planet's rapid rotation, unless we are prepared to show how this rotation is to act in forcing the cloud-masses to become true belts. The whole substance of Jupiter and his whole atmosphere must take part in his rotation, and to suppose that aqueous vapour raised from his oceans would be left behind in the upper air like the steam from a railway engine, is to make a mistake resembling that which caused Tycho Brahe to deny the rotation of the earth, because bodies projected into the air are not left behind by the rotating earth. Nor is it conceivable that belts which vary remarkably, from time to time, in position and extent, should be formed by sun-raised clouds in the Jovian atmosphere, if the planet's surface is divided into permanent lands and seas.

But we are thus led to consider a circumstance which, as it appears to us, disposes finally of the idea that in the cloud-rings of Jupiter we have to deal with phenomena resembling those presented by our own earth.

We are too apt in studying the celestial objects to forget that where all seems at nearly perfect rest, there may be processes of the utmost activity,—nay, rather of the utmost violence,—taking place as it were under our very eyes, and yet not perceptible save to the eye of reason. Looking at Jupiter, under his ordinary aspect, even in the finest telescope, one would feel certain that a general calm prevailed over his mighty globe. The steadfast equatorial ring, and the straight and sharply defined bands over either hemisphere, suggest certainly no idea of violent action. And when some feature in a belt is seen to change slowly in figure,—or rather, when at the end of a certain time it is found to have so changed, for no eye can follow such changes as they proceed,—we are not prepared to recognize in the process the evidence of disturbances compared with which the fiercest hurricanes that have ever raged on earth are as mere summer zephyrs.

Indeed the planet Jupiter has been selected even by astronomers of repute as an abode of pleasantness, a sort of paradise among the planet-worlds. There exists, we are told, in that distant world, a perennial spring,—“A striking display of the beneficence of the Creator,” says Admiral Smyth; “for the Jovian year contains twelve mundane years; and if there were a proportionate length of winter, that cold season would be three of the earthly years in length and tend to the destruction of vegetable life.”

Even those who have denied that Jupiter can be the abode of life, and have formed altogether unfavourable ideas of his condition, have pictured him nevertheless as the scene of continual calm, though the calm is, according to their view, the calm of gloom and desolation. They recognise in Jupiter an eternal winter rather than a perpetual spring. Whewell, for example, in that once famous work *The Plurality of Worlds*, maintained

that if living creatures exist at all in Jupiter, they must be wretched gelatinous monsters, languidly floating about in icy seas. According to him Jupiter is but a great globe of ice and water with perhaps a cindery nucleus—a glacial planet, with no more vitality in it than an iceberg.

But when we begin to examine the records of observers, and to consider them with due reference to the vast proportions of the planet, we recognise the fact that whatever may be Jupiter's unfitness to be the abode of life, it is not of an excess of stillness that his inhabitants (if he have any) can justly make complaint. Setting aside the enormous activity of which the mere existence of the belts affords evidence, and even regarding such phenomena as the formation of a disappearance of a new belt in two or three hours as merely indicative of heavy rainfalls or of the condensation of large masses of invisible aqueous vapour into clouds,—there have been signs on more occasions than one, of Jovian hurricanes blowing persistently for several weeks together at a rate compared with which the velocity of our fiercest tornadoes seems utterly insignificant. During the year 1860, a rift in one of the Jovian cloud-belts behaved in such a way as to demonstrate the startling fact that a hurricane was raging over an extent of Jovian territory equalling the whole surface of our earth, at a rate of fully 150 miles per hour. It is not too much to say that a hurricane of like velocity on our earth would destroy every building in the territory over which it raged, would uproot the mightiest forest trees, and would cause in fact universal desolation. At sea no ship that man ever made could withstand the fury of such a storm for a single minute. And yet this tremendous Jovian hurricane continued to rage with unabated fury for at least six weeks, or for fully one hundred Jovian days.

But during the last two or three years a change of so remarkable a nature has passed over Jupiter as to imply the existence of forces even more energetic than those at work in producing atmospheric changes.

In the autumn of 1870, Mr. Browning (the eminent optician and observer) called the attention of astronomers to the fact that the great equatorial zone, usually, as we have said, of a creamy white colour, had assumed a decidedly orange tint. At the same time it had become much less uniform in outline, and sundry peculiarities in its appearance could be recognised, which have been severally compared to portholes, pipe-bowls and stems, oval mouldings, and other objects of an uncelestial nature. Without entering into descriptions which could only be rendered intelligible by means of a series of elaborate illustrations, let it suffice to say that the bright edges of the belts bordering on this ruddy equatorial zone seemed to be frayed and torn like the edges of storm clouds, and that the knots and projections thus formed often extended so far upon the great orange zone, from both sides, as almost to break it up into separate parts.

Now without inquiring into the particular form of action to which these remarkable changes were due, we can see at once that they implied processes of extreme energy. For, every one of the projections and knots,

the seeming frayed edges of narrow cloud-streaks, had, in reality, an extent exceeding the largest of our terrestrial countries. Yet their aspect, and indeed the whole aspect of the ruddy belt, whose extent far exceeded the whole surface of our earth, changed obviously from night to night.

Strangely enough, these interesting observations, though they were presently confirmed by several well-known students of the heavens, did not attract that full attention from the senior astronomers of the day, which they appeared to merit. Several, indeed, of our leading astronomers were disposed to deny that anything unusual was in progress, though none asserted definitely that they based this opinion on a careful re-examination of the planet's face. But quite recently one of the most eminent of our modern observers,—Mr. Lassell, lately president of the Royal Astronomical Society—(having been led to observe the planet by the fact that certain phenomena of interest in connection with the satellite system are now in progress), found his attention attracted by the marvellous beauty of the colours presented by Jupiter's belts. After describing the appearances he had intended to observe in the first instance, he proceeds, “But this was not the phenomenon which struck me most in this rare and exquisite view of Jupiter. I must acknowledge that I have hitherto been inclined to think that there might be some exaggeration in the coloured views I have lately seen of the planet; but this property of the disc, in the view I am describing, was so unmistakable that my scepticism is at last beginning to yield.” Nor will this statement be thought to express more than the truth, when we add that in the picture accompanying his paper, Mr. Lassell presented the equatorial zone as brown-orange, and three neighbouring dark zones as purple; one of the intermediate light belts being pictured as of a light olive-green.

Let us compare these observations made in our brumous latitudes, with those effected by Father Secchi with the fine equatorial of the Roman Observatory. “During the fine evenings of this month,” he wrote last February, “Jupiter has presented a wonderful aspect. The equatorial band, of a very pronounced rose colour, was strown with a large number of yellowish clouds. Above and below this band, there were many very fine zones, with others strongly marked and narrow, which resembled stretched threads. The blue and yellow colours formed a remarkable contrast with the red zone, a contrast doubtless increased by a little illusion. The surface of the planet is actually so different from that which I have formerly seen, that there is room for the study of the planet's meteorology.”

It appears to us that when these remarkable changes are considered in combination with the circumstance that on *à priori* grounds we should expect the sun to have very little influence on the condition of the planet's atmosphere, the idea cannot but be suggested that the chief source of all this energy resides in the planet itself. The idea may seem startling at a first view, but when once entertained, many arguments will be found to present themselves in its favour.

For instance, it does not seem to have been noticed, heretofore, as a very remarkable circumstance if the Jovian belts are sun-raised, that they pass round to the nocturnal half of Jupiter and reappear again, with the same general features as before, and this often for weeks at a stretch. Even that remarkable feature whose changes led to the conclusion that mighty hurricanes were in progress, yet changed continuously and regularly during the Jovian nights as well as during the Jovian days, for one hundred such days in succession. This is perfectly intelligible if the seat of disturbance is in the planet itself, but it is perfectly inexplicable (as it seems to us) if the sun occasions all these meteorological changes in Jupiter, as he occasions all the changes which take place in our earth's atmosphere. The alternation of day and night, which is one of the most potent of all the circumstances affecting the earth's meteorological condition, appears to have no effect whatever on the condition of Jupiter's atmosphere !

Now, as respects the alternation of summer and winter, we can form no satisfactory opinion in Jupiter's case, because he has no seasons worth mentioning. For instance, in latitudes on Jupiter corresponding to our own, the difference between extreme winter and extreme summer corresponds to the difference between the warmth on March 12 and March 28, or between the warmth on September 15 and on September 31. Yet we are not without evidence as to seasonal meteorological effects in the case of the sun's outer family of planets. Saturn, a belted planet like Jupiter, and in all other respects resembling him so far as telescopic study can be trusted, has seasons even more markedly contrasted than those on our own earth. We see now one pole now another bowed towards us, and his equatorial zone is curved now downwards now upwards, so as to form two half ovals (at these opposite seasons), which, taken together, would make an ellipse about half as broad as it is long. As no less than fourteen years and a half separate the Saturnian summer and winter, we might fairly expect that the sun's action would have time to exert itself. In particular, we might fairly expect the great equatorial zone to be displaced ; for our terrestrial zone of calms or "doldrums" travels north and south of the equator as the sun shifts northwards and southwards of the celestial equator, accomplishing in this way a range of no less than 8,000 miles. But the Saturnian equatorial zone is not displaced at all during the long Saturnian year. It remains always persistently equatorial ! Nothing could be more easy than the detection of its change of place if it followed the sun ; yet no observer has ever suspected the slightest degree of systematic change corresponding with the changes of the Saturnian seasons. Or rather, it is absolutely certain that no such change takes place.

It appears, then, that night and day, and summer and winter, are alike without influence on the Jovian and Saturnian cloud zones. Can it reasonably be questioned that, this being the case, we must look for the origin of the cloud zones in these planets themselves, and not in the solar

orb, whose action must needs be largely influenced by the alternation of night and day and of the seasons?

But further, we find that a circumstance which had seemed perplexing when we compared the Jovian belts with terrestrial trade-wind zones, finds an explanation at once when we regard the belts as due to some form of action exerted by the planet itself. For let us suppose that streams of vapour are poured upwards to vast heights and with great velocity from the true surface of the planet. Then such streams starting from the surface with the rotational movement there prevailing, would be carried to regions where (owing to increase of distance from the centre) the movement due to the planet's rotation would be greater. They would thus be caught by the more swiftly-moving upper air and carried forwards, the *modus operandi* being the reverse of that observed when an engine leaves a trail of condensed steam behind it; or rather it may be compared to what would take place if a steam-engine were moving in the same direction as the wind but less swiftly, so that steam-clouds would be carried in front instead of behind.

Now, heat is the only form of force which could account for the formation of the enormous masses of cloud suspended in the atmosphere of Jupiter. And it seems difficult to conceive that the clouds could be maintained at a great height above the real surface of the planet unless that surface were intensely hot,—as hot perhaps as red-hot iron. If we supposed this to be the case we should find at once an explanation of the ruddy aspect of the dark belts. Nor would the change of the great equatorial belt from white to red imply more than that, owing to some unknown cause, clouds had not formed during the last two years over the planet's equatorial zone, or, having formed, had been dispersed in some way. We need not even imagine a complete dispersion, since the best telescopes, and notably Mr. Buckingham's fine 21-inch refractor, have shown always a multitude of minute cloud-like objects over the ruddy equatorial zone.

But the idea of a red-hot planet, or of a planet partially red-hot, will appear at a first view too *bizarre* to be entertained even for a moment. We have been so accustomed to regard Jupiter and Saturn as other worlds, that the mind is disposed to reject the conception that they can be so intensely heated as to be utterly unfit to be the abode of living creatures.

This unwillingness to accept startling ideas is not to be altogether reprehended, since it prevents the mind from forming rash and baseless speculations. Yet we must not suffer this mental habitude, excellent though it may be in its proper place, to interfere with the admission of conclusions which seem based on trustworthy evidence. Let us then inquire whether the startling hypothesis to which we have been led by the study of observed facts may not be found to be in agreement with other facts not yet considered.

It will be obvious that if the real globe of Jupiter is thus intensely heated, a portion of the planet's light must be inherent. Therefore we

might expect that the planet would shine somewhat more brightly than a globe of equal size and similarly placed, shining merely by reflecting the sun's light. Now two series of good observations have been made upon the luminosity of Jupiter. One was made by the late Professor Bond, of America, the other by Dr. Zöllner, of Germany. According to the former, Jupiter shines more brightly than he would if he reflected the whole of the light falling upon him! According to the latter, and more trustworthy series, Jupiter does not indeed shine quite so brightly as Professor Bond supposed, but the planet yet shines *three times* as brightly as a globe of equal size would shine, if similarly placed, but constituted like Mars, and *four times* as brightly as such a globe would shine if constituted like our moon. Jupiter shines in fact very nearly as brightly as though he were constituted like one of our terrestrial clouds!

This result is highly significant. If Jupiter showed no belts and shone with a pure white colour, we could explain it at once by simply regarding Jupiter as wholly cloud-covered or snow-covered (for snow and cloud shine with nearly equal lustre when similarly illuminated). But the great dark belts which occupy so large a proportion of the planet's disc altogether negative this supposition. We seem compelled to believe that some considerable portion of the planet's lustre is inherent.

Let us, however, proceed carefully here. We have to inquire first how far Zöllner's results can be trusted, and secondly, whether they are corroborated by any independent evidence. Now Zöllner carefully estimated the weight of his observations,—we may say he jealously estimated their weight, for it must be remembered that he was in no way interested in securing a greater or less result, while he was greatly interested in so stating the value of his results that those who might succeed him in the inquiry should not detect any serious error in his estimate. But his opinion of the probable degree of error in his observations was such as scarcely to affect to an appreciable extent the statements we have made above. Taking Zöllner's lowest estimate of Jupiter's brightness, that statement remains appreciably correct.

And next as to corroborative evidence.

It happens that we have a very delicate means of measuring the degree of Jupiter's luminosity, as compared with that of other orbs similarly placed. For his satellites pass across his face, and nothing can be easier than to observe whether they appear darker or brighter than his surface.

It was an observation such as this which Mr. Lassell had made on the night when he noticed the ruddiness of Jupiter's great medial belt. By a singular chance Father Secchi made a similar observation during his researches, and the reader will see, when we have quoted the narratives of both these observers, that the comparative darkness of all four satellites will have been established. "The fourth satellite," says Lassell, "has begun again for a season to cross the planet's disc, and I have looked out for opportunities of observing its passages, and was favoured

on the night of the 30th December last by witnessing a part of its passage under circumstances more than usually propitious. On its first entrance it was scarcely to be distinguished from the edge, not appearing at all as the others do, as a round bright spot. As it advanced it grew gradually manifestly darker than the surface of the planet, and by the time it had advanced a fourth of the way across it had become a very dark if not a *black* spot—so dark, indeed, that if I had looked at Jupiter without knowing anything of the positions of his satellites, I should have said that a *shadow* (of a satellite) was passing. I remember having seen the like phenomenon many years ago; but my impression is that I had never seen the disc of the satellite so near to absolute blackness before. Of course it is only by contrast that it can possibly so appear; and we have in this fact a striking proof of the exceeding brilliancy of the surface of the planet. In the same way the solar spots, if not surrounded by the marvellous splendour of the sun's surface, would doubtless appear as brilliant objects."

Next let us hear Secchi's account. "On the evening of February 3rd," he says, "I observed the transit of the third satellite and that of its shadow. The satellite seemed almost black when it was upon the middle of the planet's disc, and notably smaller than its shadow, which was visible at the same time; one would have estimated it at only one-half. In approaching the edge the satellite disappeared, and reappeared soon after, close by the edge, but as a bright point. This fact is not a new one for the other satellites, but for the third it is unique. This result shows also the great difference of luminosity at the centre and near the edge of the planet, a difference already confirmed by photography."

It is hardly necessary to point out how strikingly these facts illustrate and confirm Dr. Zöllner's observations. But they also supply fresh evidence of a very interesting nature.

Although a part of the difference dwelt on in Secchi's closing words may be ascribed to the oblique incidence of the light near the planet's edge, yet it does not appear to us that the whole difference can be thus explained. A difference so great that a satellite appears as a bright point close by the planet's edge, and almost black near the middle of the disc, suggests that the light near the edge is not reinforced by the inherent luminosity of our theory, that luminosity adding only to the brightness of the central parts of the disc. We would not insist too strongly on this inference, because the darkening due to oblique incidence is, under certain circumstances, very obvious to direct observation. But it seems to us that a portion of the difference should be referred to the inherent luminosity of the central parts of the disc. This being admitted, it would follow that the real solid globe of the planet is much smaller than the globe measured by astronomers; and that, therefore, instead of that amazingly small density which is so perplexing a feature of the planet's physical condition, Jupiter's globe may have a density equalling or exceeding that of the earth.

And after all, let us remember that the theory that Jupiter is an intensely heated globe—a theory to which we have been led by the consideration of many observed facts, and which in its turn suggests very satisfactory explanations of other observed facts—would merely show that, as Jupiter and Saturn hold an intermediate position between the sun and the minor planets in respect of size, so those giant orbs hold a corresponding position in respect of inherent heat. Roughly speaking, the earth is 8,000 miles, the sun 840,000 miles, in diameter, and Jupiter, with his diameter of 82,000 miles, comes midway between these orbs. Now, the sun is at a white heat, and the earth gives out only what is called obscure heat; and if Jupiter's globe is at a red heat, he again comes midway between the sun and the earth.

We should be led by the theory here maintained to regard the major planets which travel outside the zone of asteroids as in a sense secondary suns. So viewed, they could not be regarded as orbs fit for the support of living creatures. Yet, as each of them is the centre of a scheme of dependent worlds, of dimensions large enough to supply room for many millions of living creatures, we should not merely find a *raison d'être* for the outer planets, but we should be far better able to explain their purpose in the scheme of creation than on any theory hitherto put forward respecting them. Jupiter as an abode of life is a source of wonder and perplexity, and his satellites seem scarcely to serve any useful purpose. He appears as a bleak and desolate dwelling-place, and they together supply him with scarcely a twentieth part of the light which we receive from our moon at full. But regarding Jupiter as a miniature sun, not indeed possessing any large degree of inherent lustre, but emitting a considerable quantity of heat, we recognize in him the fitting ruler of a scheme of subordinate orbs, whose inhabitants would require the heat which he affords to eke out the small supply which they receive directly from the sun. The Saturnian system, again, is no longer mysterious when thus viewed. The strange problem presented by the rings, which actually conceal the sun from immense regions of the planet for years together in the very heart of the winter of those regions, is satisfactorily solved when the Saturnian satellites are regarded as the abodes of life, and Saturn himself as the source of a considerable proportion of their heat-supply. We do not say that, in thus exhibiting the Jovian and Saturnian systems in a manner which accords with our ideas respecting the laws of life in the universe, we have given irrefragable testimony in favour of our theory. That theory must stand or fall according to the evidence in its favour or against it. But so long as men believe that there is design in the scheme of the universe, they will be readier to accept conclusions which exhibit at once the major planets and their satellites as occupying an intelligible position in that scheme, than views which leave the satellites unaccounted for, and present the giant planets themselves as very questionable abodes for any known orders of living creatures.

The Clerk of the Weather:

A CHRONICLE OF NEVELUNDREGENSTEIN.

I.

PEOPLE had long been agreed that it was time there were an end to all this in the Duchy of Nevelundregenstein. The weather had for many years been going all amiss. It snowed in spring, it froze in early autumn, the wind in June was boisterous and keen, the air in February mild as May. Not a soul in Nevelundregenstein but spoke bitterly of the seasons, was sarcastic about the sun, and alluded in terms of opprobrium and disdain to the Clerk of the Weather. For what, said they, was the use of an official who could not keep his elements under better control? Where was the sense of maintaining a clerk who let cold and heat play such silly freaks that there was no knowing a week beforehand what arrangements one should make or what clothes one should put on? Public festivities, and indeed all outdoor labours generally were reduced under such a system as this to a mere game of pitch and toss. Civic pageants were conducted amidst deluges of sleet, fireworks mounted with the greatest care to solemnize loyal anniversaries spluttered miserably at the time of ignition; at the last review passed by the Grand Duke, his Serene Highness and staff had been drenched through like so many sops. And when somebody or other remarked that Jupiter had once handed over the ordinance of the seasons to a peasant who had not come very brilliantly out of the experiment, people answered with great scorn that the man as a peasant was naturally ignorant, that the date was also very long ago when men's minds were dark; and that besides the thing had never happened at all, being a mere invention of *Æsop*'s, who was an ironical fellow addicted to light writing and captious inferences. "Ah!" added they, "if the management of the elements could only be handed over in this age of progress to the responsible ministry of Nevelundregenstein, there would be a very different story!"

Now these objurgations were distasteful to the Clerk of the Weather. After all he did his best, but he had a great many countries to attend to. In proportion as the world grew populated he could no longer give to whole tracts of land a climate only fitted for newts or fire-flies; he was obliged to see that each corner of the globe was at least habitable, and this work, difficult and harassing in itself, was not rendered more easy by the unceasing watch which the Nevelundregensteiners kept even over those portions of the globe which did not concern them. For of late years a custom had sprung up in the Duchy of roaming over the world at

summer-tide in excursion-parties, and, if from the beginning of these summer-trips to the end, the weather was not of the finest, freshest, and sunniest, the excursionists were no sooner home than they filled the public prints with their wailings, protesting that this and that climate had been culpably over-vaunted, and that the weather all the globe over was detestable. So one year, when complaints of this sort had been raging with more than usual virulence, when some learned persons had even written books to prove that the course of the seasons was quite disorganized, and when it had passed into common pleasantry to carry an umbrella about with one as the only means of securing a fine day, the Clerk of the Weather made up his mind that he would no longer remain in office to be abused in this fashion. Since his best efforts were misinterpreted, since he reaped no thanks, but only ingratitude from his most conscientious endeavours to please, he would perpetrate a resolve he had often meditated before, and send in his resignation.

This welcome piece of news was not spread all at once through the Duchy. As usually happens, a rumour of it first obtained circulation in the drawing-rooms of Nevelstadt, which is the ducal capital; then the clubs got to whisper about it at curaçoa time, then groups of well-informed passengers who travelled into Nevelstadt by the morning trains, and back therefrom in the evening ones, chatted about it cautiously among themselves at the stations where they halted; then, at length, when everybody had more or less an inkling of the truth, a semi-official newspaper declared itself authorized to announce that certain changes of a beneficial nature were in contemplation with regard to the management of the weather in his Serene Highness's dominions; and this having elicited a question in the Lower House of the Reichsrath, the Prime Minister rose in his place a few days afterwards, amidst a dead silence, and stated that a communication had in effect been received by his Serene Highness's Government from the Empire of the Clouds, notifying a denunciation of the weather-treaty hitherto existing between the two realms. He believed communications of a similar character had been addressed to the governments of other States, but owing to representations that these States were satisfied with the working of the existing weather-treaties, the Empire of the Clouds had consented to a renewal of them. With the Duchy of Nevelundregenstein, however, the Cloud Government had in a despatch, which he was happy to describe as most courteous and friendly, declined to sign a renewal. Accordingly, the management of the weather in his Highness's dominions would on and after a date to be settled by pending negotiations pass entirely into the hands of the Nevelundregenstein Government.

To pretend that this communication caused unmixed and universal satisfaction would not be quite correct, for there are carping minds everywhere, and some of those who had been loudest in vituperating the fickleness of the seasons were not less loud, now that there was a prospect of a change, in exclaiming that things were very well as they were. On the whole, however, the impression was favourable. People

were tired of being wetted or sunned upon according to no fixed plan ; they envied the fate of those happier countries where the rain would fall in duly appointed cataracts for three months without stopping, and leave one to uninterrupted and baking sunshine for the rest of the year. Moreover, they had every confidence in the sagacity of the Nevelundregensteiner Government, and though to be sure the outward manifestations of this confidence consisted chiefly in groans about the taxes, yet had it been put to the nation by a solemn vote, whether the cabinet were fit to undertake the new duties laid upon them, the majority would have voted the affirmative, deeming the Government suited to any work that entailed an increase of pay and patronage. So there was a great deal of mutual congratulation all round. Friends shook each other's hands with much warmth in the public streets. Maps were sold delineating the course of the sun under the old system, and suggesting amended cycles for its future revolutions ; and the only people who found it difficult to evince much cheerfulness were those who sold umbrellas, galoshes, or waterproof clothing. These, it must be confessed, made some stir ; but a deputation of them having waited upon the Prime Minister, to remonstrate against any changes likely to affect their trades, received from him the gratifying assurance that every regard would be paid to vested interests. This pleased them so well that they retired to a public room, and cordially voted him a presentation umbrella with a silver-gilt handle, as a token of their esteem.

In the meantime, however, the Government, fully alive to the importance of their coming duties, were taking measures for the efficient discharge of them. Very properly shelving all other legislation, they applied themselves to the framing of a bill intituled, "A Bill for the Regulation of all Things appertaining to the Temperature, Weather, and Climate of His Serene Highness's Duchy." This bill (to introduce which six dozen and a half of smaller government measures were, amid piercing cries from those interested in them, withdrawn) comprised twenty-six schedules and five hundred and sixty-four clauses, covering between them a hundred and fifteen pages of printed paper. It was read the first time without opposition, and a second time after considerable opposition, but eventually the House came to agreement upon the following clauses :—

That an officer should be appointed bearing the title of Principal Clerk of State for the Weather Department.

That he should draw a large salary.

That he should have a seat in the Cabinet and change with the Ministry.

That under-clerks and secretaries should be appointed at his discretion to serve under him and constitute the Department.

That all these clerks should draw large salaries.

And that an edifice or observatory should be built at the public expense to house the Clerk of State and the entire Weather Department.

In committee several amendments were moved, which gave rise, both in the House and outside it, to disputing and acrimony. But this was

always the way in Nevelundregenstein, for it was the happiness and privilege of the country to be divided into two parties equally eloquent in debate. When one party said black the other party cried white ; and if one party contended that two and two made five, nothing could equal the energy of the other in proving that they made only three. Naturally the public good was much advanced by this method of doing things, which, in the language of the country, was called discussing a question impartially ; but the truly admirable feature of Nevelundregenstein politics was that, instead of being each trammelled by a set of fixed opinions—(which surely is as degrading a predicament for a party as can well be conceived)—either political section adopted the other's conviction with remarkable candour according as they were in office or out of it. This prevented the country at large from being quite so clear on the subject of party distinctions as they might otherwise have been, and led to the general belief that a politician was a biped variety of the chameleon. But one must beware of endorsing this opinion further than by designating the rival parties simply as the Ins and the Outs ; for if once one were to set oneself to shaking the prestige of those who are kind enough to take this world's affairs into their keeping, what hope would there be for human progress ? One should always be reverential.

So then the Ins and the Outs wrangled pursuant to time-honoured custom over the amendments, some of which were lost, and others, after much rhetoric and exertion, carried. Among the latter was one which set forth, that “whereas it was expedient that the Clerk of the Weather Department should be a man learned in astronomy no person should be appointed to have, hold, or enjoy that office who had not previously had, held, or enjoyed the office of Ducal Astronomer, or Assistant Ducal Astronomer or Astronomer, Assistant Astronomer, or Sub-Assistant Astronomer to his Highness's fleet.” This amendment was cheerfully accepted by the Government, and the Prime Minister having set eyes upon his cousin for the post of Clerk of the Weather, appointed him as soon as the bill was passed, Ducal Astronomer on a Monday, and Clerk of the Weather on a Tuesday, which everybody except the Outs admitted was a most ingenious and satisfactory interpretation of the law. On his side the new Clerk of the Weather immediately filled up all the higher posts in the Weather Department with his kinsmen, who knew nothing of astronomy ; but he was justly and implacably severe in demanding that all the copying clerks should be astronomical, and, upon six of these clerkships, at a salary of four hundred thalers a year each, being generously thrown open to the public, an examination was devised of such beneficial stiffness that the six successful candidates were removed from the examination-room in cabs to the hydropathic establishment, where they were treated with all kindness and cold water for six weeks. This part of the matter being so happily settled, nothing remained but to set to work on the observatory ; and, when three weeks had been spent in debating on the sum to be voted, and three months on the choice of a

site, and six months more on a competition between architects, and yet other six months in discussing whether some other site and some other architect would not do better than those originally selected, an edifice was at last raised almost as good as any that could have been built for half the time and for a fifth of the money. By this date the delay which had been recorded for the termination of the weather treaty was almost at an end, and preparations were being pushed on vigorously in the Duchy for the national holiday which was to celebrate the transfer of the weather from celestial to terrestrial management. Flags and patriotic devices glowed in the shop windows; the gas people and pyrotechnicians had more orders than they could meet; grand stands were erected where comprehensive views of the horizon might be obtained; telescopes and field-glasses rose to a premium, and official bills were posted at all the street corners announcing the meteorological programme of the day's rejoicings. First, there was to be a splendid aurora borealis at ten, then a grand dispersion of clouds by a south-west wind at eleven. At half-past twelve and half-past three a rainbow; in the evening a sunset as in the Arctic regions, with illumination of the firmament into masses of orange, blue, violet, purple, and scarlet clouds; after moon-rise a flight of meteors with dance of shooting stars, and intermittent flashes of sheet lightning; the whole to conclude with a streak of forked lightning, a peal of cloud artillery, and the fall of a thunderbolt at midnight. In the Reichsrath, the Out party, backed by the entire Umbrella Interest, took exception to this programme from its not including a shower of rain, and determined efforts were made to add this refreshing feature to the list of the day's entertainments; but the motion to that effect failed, and the Government could not even be prevailed upon to follow up the fall of the midnight thunderbolt by a half hour's storm which should cool the atmosphere. Whereat the Outs consoled themselves, reflecting that if the Ministry began by arraying against it such powerful bodies as the umbrella, galosh and waterproof vendors, there would very soon be a change of cabinet.

II.

Now to understand the influence which the new weather-management exercised both over the upper and lower classes of society in Neveistadt, let it be mentioned that on the morning of the Transfer Day the Frau Gräfin von Rosenblatter was waiting for the dress with which she hoped to outdazzle all the other ladies in the Grand Stand, tickets of admission to which had kindly been placed at her disposal by the new Clerk of the Weather, the gentleman who knew nothing of astronomy and drew a large salary. It was seven o'clock, and the dress, which had been promised for the evening before, had not yet come. Half-past seven, and no sign of the dress. At 7.45, Carl the head footman was despatched in a cab to the dressmaker's, to say that, whatever was the condition of the dress, it was to be brought *immediately*, with a great stress and a stamp of the foot on the word "immediately." At 7.50, Conrad the second footman was

sent off in a second cab, to say that the Gräfin begged and entreated that the dress might be finished in all haste, so that she might be in time for the Aurora Borealis. At 8, if there had been a third footman he would have been sent in a third cab; but there were only two, so the Gräfin paced about her room, wringing her pretty hands in despair, until—just as her watch pointed to 8.15—there was a great rattling down below, a cab drew up at the door, a flustered female stepped out, bearing aloft a cloud of silk, satin, and lace; there was a patterning of feet up the staircase, the Frau Gräfin's maid and the dressmaker entered together, and there lay the dress completed. Then the Gräfin—who, had she been told a few minutes before that the dress could not be ready for another hour, would have gone down on her knees to pray the sempstresses not to delay beyond that time—thought good, now that the dress was before her in a state of perfection, to make the full weight of her displeasure felt by the dressmaker; which proves that in the Duchy of Nevelundregenstein, at least, a dressmaker can as well afford to be entirely late as only half so.

However, the dress once on was found to be so surpassing and the dressmaker was really so submissive and repentant that the Gräfin, who had a good heart when things went well, gradually relented. She looked at herself in the glass, and saw that the fit was absolutely faultless. The dressmaker and the maid exclaimed in concert that nothing so bewitching had ever been seen. She turned a little to see whether the dress sat as well on the shoulders, and the maid and dressmaker chorused that her ladyship would be the best-attired countess in all Nevelstadt. This made her smile, and she was now pleased to notice that the dressmaker looked pale and fagged and sighed now and then plaintively. As she had long employed this dressmaker, who was a worthy person of what is, by courtesy, styled middle-age, her ladyship graciously asked what was the matter with her.

“I am in great trouble, my lady,” answered the dressmaker, kneeling to give a stitch to a small portion of trimming which did not sit quite smooth.

“Oh, dear me!” exclaimed the Countess, turning pale; “is it that the dress doesn't fit well behind?”

“Oh, the dress fits, my lady; it's something much worse than that.”

The Countess wondered what could possibly be worse than a dress which didn't fit behind; but being reassured by the protestations of both maid and needlewoman, and having further reassured herself by causing the cheval-glass to be wheeled at right angles to that in the wardrobe panel, so that she could see with her own eyes, she recovered her equanimity, and recurred with interest to her former question.

“I am in deep distress about my son, my lady,” sighed the milliner, continuing to stitch—“a lad who had never given me a moment's uneasiness before, and was an angel in men's clothes, so to say.”

“I was not aware you had a son,” replied the Countess, taking from her maid's hands and placing on her own golden hair what looked like a

well-assorted flower-basket, but was in reality a bonnet ; "I thought you had only daughters, Frau Bundel."

"Two daughters and a son, my lady, which makes three. And I know that there's nothing so troubling to a mother's heart as girls who are beginning to be smiled at by gentlemen who pass down the street ; so much so, that I say to them morning and evening, 'My daughters, the girl that smiles to gentlemen at eighteen will find nothing to smile at at thirty-six.' "

"Those sentiments do you honour, Frau Bundel," remarked the Gräfin, tying her bonnet-strings.

"Thank you, my lady ; but, though daughters, as I say, are a care to the heart, what is to become of a mother when her only son—bred to the best schooling, in hopes of his becoming a doctor and rolling his brougham among the upper classes—takes to keeping company with good-for-noughts, who wear no linen to speak of, and meet in low public-houses to say that all men are equal ? "

"Dear, dear, how very dreadful," ejaculated the Countess, flattening the bow of her bonnet with the palm of her hand, and watching the effect in the mirror. "So your son goes to public-houses, and you wanted to make a doctor of him, Frau Bundel ? "

"A doctor, my lady, or anything approaching," answered the modiste, rising from her knees, and retreating to survey the dress as amended. "I think, my lady, if I was just to stick another point here to keep this puffing of satin flatter—puffs are not worn so full as last year, though one may say it's a matter of taste, for the Gräfin von Lilienblume wears hers very large ; but then the Gräfin is a little taller than your ladyship."

"Taller ! Yes, indeed, Frau Bundel. I should have said a very maypole."

"Yes, my lady."

"And so awkward, too."

"Yes, my lady."

"If she were not one of my best friends, I should have called her the most absurdly-dressed person in Nevelstadt."

"Yes, my lady."

"You must be quick with those stitches, Frau Bundel, for I would not be behindhand with the Aurora Borealis for all the world. Caroline, my gloves. I hope, Frau Bundel, your son will amend his ways. Drinking is, of all the vices, the worst for a young man to fall into. You must tell him that, and make him reform from this day—a great day, you know."

"Ah, my lady, it's this day and the talk about it that has been the cause of all his wrong-going," moaned Frau Bundel, sewing at the puff.

"But it's not from drinking, bless his heart ! If it had been no worse than drinking, we might have had hopes of him—me, his sisters, and his father ; but it's politics that's turning his head : and what he can find to excite him in such mischief is more than I know or can guess. Such a

well-behaved boy, too, as he was when he was young, my lady! Every holiday he'd come home from school with his arms full of prizes, and he'd recite all the kings of Israel and Judah at tea, so that it was a pleasure to hear him. And it was the same when he got older, until he fell in with bad friends, and made the acquaintance of that Herr Feuerkopf, whom I should love to see hanged, though God forbid I should wish evil to any man."

"Who is Herr Feuerkopf?" asked the Countess, who, having been chiefly occupied in drawing on the right-hand glove of a ten-button pair, had scarcely caught more than a stray word or two. "I fancy I have read his name in the newspapers. Caroline, these gloves don't match well with the dress; find me a paler shade of straw, the palest."

"Oh! Herr Feuerkopf, my lady, he's in the newspaper often," replied Frau Bundel, still mournfully busy with the puff; "and, certainly, your ladyship must have heard his name many a time, for, wherever he may be, one hears nothing but him. It's he that does all the talking, my lady. He gets young men round him, and workmen, and spectacled women, and such like, and they go at it all together, he telling them of their wrongs and they shouting, so that once a fortnight the publicans at whose houses they meet are obliged to give 'em warning because of the neighbours. Ah! it's not into the streets I'd turn 'em if I was the neighbours, but right into a horse-pond, the whole cartload of 'em, saving, of course, my own boy, who was a good lad until they got telling them that he was a citizen with imprescriptible rights, and other such silly palavering. 'Why do you go with them?' said I to him no later than last night, my lady; and his answer was, 'Mother, the tide of progress is sweeping onwards towards the rocks of privilege, and the day is coming when all social inequalities must be made smooth.' And I, thinking to humour him and wheedle the nonsense out of him by coaxing, said, 'And how will that be, Hans?' and he replied, 'Mother, the meteorologico-socialistic revolution is preparing in the dark. Those who live on the aching of the working-man's limbs, and mix their bread with the grindings of his bones, think that now they're to have the disposing of the weather they'll heap snow and hail, frosts and tempests on him, to press down his soul into the dust. But winter and other such relics of oppression have had their day. Why should the poor man freeze that the rich one may skate? Why should the wife and children of the proletary shiver over their empty grate in order that Dives may glow beside his yule log, and his wife disport herself in gowns of velvet, trimmed with sable fur? Henceforth, mother, there'll be one weather for all, small and great, rich and poor. It'll not be December with its blasts, nor the dog-days with their sultry heat, parching the throats of all that can't afford to pay for cream-ices. Henceforth, the working-man 'll have spring weather all the year round —that's what he'll have, or he'll ask the reason why in letters of blood——'"

At this moment Frau Bundel finished the puff, and there was a knock

at the door from Conrad, the second footman, who had come to inform Fraulein Caroline, the maid, that the Herr Hauptmann Otto von Rosen (my lady's cousin, and of the Ducal Guards) was waiting in the drawing-room to escort her ladyship to the sightseeing. The Gräfin was absorbed in the ninth button of her right-hand glove, but she had been listening to the last words of her dressmaker, and now muttered in astonishment, "Dear me, Frau Bundel, what shocking things you have been saying!"

"It's not I that says them, my lady," remonstrated Frau Bundel, with a deep sigh, and restoring thimble, scissors, and thread to her pocket. "It's my own Hans who is a grief to us all by his way of talking. Nothing could be better than that dress, my lady. And it's many a time I've said to Hans, 'My boy, the man that takes to politics at one-and-twenty ends his days on the gallows at two-and-forty.'"

"You must repeat that to him again, Frau Bundel. Caroline, my smelling-bottle. Nothing could be more dreadful than that a young man respectably connected, and the son of my dressmaker, should become tainted with revolutionaryism. I am afraid your son must be irreligious and frivolous, Frau Bundel. Not that parasol, Caroline, the pink one. And mind you tell him that the way of transgressors is hard and leads to the pit; it's all in a tract which the Bishop of Nevelstadt gave me, and which I have not had time to read. Caroline shall find it you, and you must give it to Herr Hans for his moral good."

Saying which, the Frau Gräfin fastened the tenth button of her left glove, cast a parting glance at the mirror, took her smelling-bottle, parasol, and opera-glass (which she had been nearly forgetting) in one hand, gathered her skirts with the other, directed Fraulein Caroline to take a white burnous down to the barouche, and with a consolatory nod and smile to Frau Bundel, who curtseyed, swept downstairs to the drawing-room, where Captain Otto von Rosen was waiting. Yet another few minutes, and her ladyship, the Captain, and her ladyship's husband, the Graf von Rosenblatter, who had a Senator's ticket for the Legislative Grand Stand, were rolling along as fast as the crowded state of the streets would allow, towards the spot where the best view might be obtained of the whole day's proceedings.

But perhaps we shall do better not to report these proceedings at very full length; for, if the truth must be told, they were not an entire success. Not that the police arrangements were defective. Only half-a-dozen people were killed and fifty more wounded, which gives evidence enough of the care which was shown. But when any human community undertakes new duties, it is natural that there should be a few hitches, and on this day there were many hitches. The agreement come to between the Empire of the Clouds and the Government of Nevelundregenstein was that, in order to obviate the inconvenience which might arise to other countries if the Nevelundregensteiners were empowered to alter the sun's course, their means of regulating the temperature of their duchy should be a magnetic apparatus, by which they could intensify or deaden the sun's rays over their

heads just as one turns on or lowers a jet of gas. This apparatus was to correspond with the sun by invisible magnetic currents proceeding from copper wires. Further, the Nevelundregenstein Government were to have full discretion as to which winds should sweep over their country, north or east winds, if not wanted, being diverted from their beats by a second apparatus communicating with invisible atmospheric bellows, which bellows could supply constant draughts of cool, tepid, or hot air as needed. Moreover, in order to secure unfettered choice in the matter of day, night or twilight, a third apparatus could at any moment eclipse the sun behind a constellation of shooting stars; or if sunlight were wanted after the hours when that luminary sets in the latitude where Nevelundregenstein lies, a few simple turns of the instrument could array these stars in such wise that they should act as reflectors, and convey light as the moon does, but much stronger and warmer. This was the arrangement, but naturally the Weather Act passed by the Nevelundregenstein Parliament had taken care that no dangers should be risked by undue simplicity. Thus, as it was very essential that the three apparatuses of Heat, Wind, and Light should operate in conjunction, it had been specially enacted that they should be kept distinct, and each form a separate sub-department, the sub-clerk of Heat having nothing whatever to do with the sub-clerk of Light, and the sub-clerk of Light being formally debarred from holding any terms whatever with the sub-clerk of the Winds. To make everything surer, the three sub-departments had been located each in a different set of buildings, a wise distance apart; pains had been taken to foster a wholesome spirit of rivalry between them by leaving certain duties and prerogatives—those of rain-supply, for instance—an open question, to be disputed about in leisure hours; and a Government minute had decreed that on all occasions when two or all three of the sub-departments should have to act in concert, the arrangements between them should only be effected by means of correspondence. The sub-clerks were to write to one another, and a copy of each communication was to be remitted to the Assistant Clerk of State, who, in his turn, would forward the whole correspondence with a report thereon to the Principal Clerk of State, who was to take action upon it in his wisdom. Anybody who has grasped the details of his scheme with his full understanding will cease to wonder that precisely at the hour of ten on the Transfer Day, when the weather passed under Nevelundregenstein control, there should have been symptoms of departmental conflict. To the brightly dressed and aristocratic bevies who thronged the stands in the Ducal park, and to the less aristocratic crowds who were graciously permitted to thrust their noses through the bars of the park-railings, it seemed at first as though the light had broken free from management. Most of the spectators were aware that an Aurora Borealis is usually a twilight phenomenon, and the fact of its being on this occasion ordered for ten o'clock in the morning was to be, so to speak, a formal and solemn manifestation of the new power required by Nevelundregenstein. But it

looked somehow as if the elements meant to be rebellious. Instead of being bathed in a flood of purple light chequered by shimmering waves of orange, the sky turned alternately red and black, as if the door of some gigantic baker's oven was being repeatedly opened and banged to. The ladies in the stands were astonished, and kept their faces and opera-glasses rather anxiously upturned. The Countess of Rosenblatter, who had most affectionately greeted the Countess of Lilienblume, and was now standing beside her delighted to see how completely she was "cutting her out," asked of Captain Otto von Rosen, who was foremost cavalier in the group of knights in attendance on these ladies, what could possibly be the reason of these vagaries; and the gallant officer answered that it was nothing, that one of his friends was a Clerk in the Weather Office, that probably the instrument worked a little stiff at first, but that it would be all right presently. Instead of being all right presently, however, the uneasiness increased as the minutes wore on. Vast masses of inky clouds were accumulating overhead. The sun now glaring, now half concealed, looked as if it were squinting. By fits the air was overpoweringly hot and chill as in a cellar. Uncomfortable glances were exchanged. Captain Otto von Rosen repeated that it was all right, for that the thing was down in the programme, "Dispersion of clouds by a south-west wind at eleven." And true enough, but instead of the south-west wind, a wrong pair of bellows had apparently been set blowing, for punctually to the time a shiver, long, sharp and terrible, ran of a sudden through all the crowds. Shoulders shrank up by the tens of thousands, heads were bowed, feminine voices wailed, "Oh dear!" masculine tongues muttered something more energetic beginning with a D; and heralded by a furious whistling roar as of a myriad of lions let loose, the north wind burst unchained over the landscape. Above, the affrighted clouds tumbled over one another like panic-stricken sheep in a fold; below, the trees in the Ducal Park bowed, trembled, and shook away their leaves from them in rustling showers. The planks and rafters of the grand stands creaked; the scarlet hangings and the streamers on them were blown into ribbons; and a desolate, scrambling scene ensued as gentlemen reft of their hats with noses blued and fingers fast numbing, limped over benches and sought to muffle ladies who crouched with chattering teeth or uttered lamentable cries. All this was the result of the first few minutes' burst; but presently Boreas, getting his clean sweep of the sky, redoubled his efforts, and then what followed was as war beside mimicry to what had gone before. For now the trees, growing epileptic, tossed their branches aloft and parted with huge leafy limbs at a time; everything that resembled a pole, pillar, or flagstaff, was couched flat; the roof of a grand stand containing members of the lesser clergy was blown bodily into a piece of ornamental water, and no proof exists since that fatal day that a lesser clergyman was not blown with it. Under the ducal stand a body-guard of cavalry, in waiting on his Serene Highness, was scattered like chaff and disappeared; and no one knows to this hour what would have become of the Burgo-

master and Town Council of Nevelstadt, who were entering the park processionaly when the scrimmage began, had not these dignitaries courageously anchored themselves to their mace. As for the caps, cravats, shawls and babies of the outside rabble, they darkened the atmosphere; and on the roofs of the houses skirting the park it looked as if uprooted chimney-pots and loosened slates were dancing an infernal gallop.

But the trials of the day were by no means over, for at the Weather Office the clerks on duty, divining by the signs in the heavens that some mistake had been committed, met in council to confer as to what should be done. A large fraction of the clerks opined resolutely that when an administrative blunder has been perpetrated, it behoves every clerk to stand by it, protest before heaven and earth that he was in the right, and continue on that tack until he converts half the public by his much screaming. Another fraction, less versed in time-honoured traditions, were of opinion that since it was clearly a south-west wind that had been ordered, and the mistake had only arisen from the accidental crossing of the magnetic wires, since again the whole enjoyment of the public would be marred if the mishap were not rectified, the best thing to do was to let loose the south-west wind immediately. Oddly enough this view prevailed, and the Austral breeze was at once set blowing. But the clerk, who, by crossing the wires, had been the cause of the little disturbance, argued with considerable justice that if he were now to revoke the north wind, he should be confessing an error and so stultifying himself in the face of all mankind, which being a young man of status, with an eye to promotion, he positively declined to do. In consequence, he mounted guard over the north wind bellows' handle, saying nobody should touch it; and the two hostile gales were thus at large simultaneously. They rushed to the rencounter like a pair of celestial mad bulls who have broken their tether, and the clouds sped before them in mountainous masses, dark, ponderous, and swift. It was inevitable they should meet, and, like loyal clouds as they were, they selected for their battle region the vault above the park, in order that his Serene Highness the Grand-Duke might miss nothing of the spectacle. The shock produced a clap of thunder louder than any which had been heard before or has been heard since, and to this one succeeded another and then another, peal following upon peal as the firmament became slit with steel-blue streaks of lightning, and the heavens belched out their waters in a hissing, raging, blinding down-pour which had soon soaked into sponges all the lesser clergy in the roofless stand, the Burgomaster and Town Council, holding on to the mace, and indeed every man, woman and quadruped out of doors, not excepting the new Clerk of the Weather, who, as in duty bound, had been watching all the proceedings with an imperturbable eye from a seat of honour in the cabinet-box. But let us draw a veil over the heartrending scene. When, after a few hours manding and countermanding, despatching of estafettes, and racing about, telegraphing, letter-writing and mutual recriminations of every one concerned directly or indirectly with officialism; when it had been

demonstrated to the satisfaction of the entire Government that nobody was to blame, and when the Clerk who had mounted guard over the bellows' handle had succeeded in proving irrefutably that but for him everything would have been lost, then some means was found for stopping the rain and everybody slunk home—among the rest the Countess of Rosenblatter, whose distress arose not so much from her new dress being ruined and from herself being half dead with cold, as from the maddening fact that the Countess of Lilienblume, having been attired in a more reasonable costume than hers, had weathered the storm bravely to the end, and looked all the prettier for it. That night nine-tenths of Nevelstadt went to bed with colds in their heads; it was a happy season for doctors and chemists; but everybody swore undying rancour to the Clerk of the Weather, maintaining that if he had known anything of astronomy, all these things would not have happened.

This conclusion, however, we venture to submit, was both ridiculous and unjust; for it had long been admitted in Nevelundregenstein that the necessity for knowing anything about the functions one might be called upon to discharge was an exploded fallacy. It was received as an axiom that for a man to direct an army he should never have been a soldier; that the best person to manage a navy was one who had never seen a ship; and that the surest claim to success as a parliamentary debater was ignorance of oratory. Some people, pushing the system further, lived in hopes that the corps de ballet in the theatres might some day be recruited exclusively among the legless; that judges and jurymen should be selected for their deafness; and that editors of newspapers should qualify by attesting that they could neither read nor write. Meantime, these persons drew encouragement from the circumstance that most of the national composers knew very little of music; and, that on the hanging committees of the Nevelundregensteiner exhibitions, the majority of artists were blind with one eye.

III.

Bitter was the chagrin among the poor as well as the rich of Nevelstadt at the failure of the public holiday; but if there had stood in the crowd at the park railings any vigilant reporter—as perhaps there did—he might have noticed three men, adorned with spreading wideawakes, which made them look like three dusky toad-stools, who sniggered contentedly at the whole scene. These were Feuerkopf, the tribune; Ganzbrenner, another of the same persuasion, his satellite; and young Hans Bundel, the dressmaker's son, advocate of the meteorologico-socialistic revolution and disciple of the other two.

It is one consequence of popular government in the blessed age in which we live that there should always be a proportion of just men in every commonwealth for whom national calamities are a source of secret delight; calamity being like the spoon which stirs the broth in the pot, and brings certain vegetables to the top which otherwise would have remained at the

bottom. At every piece of bungling in the weather festivities Feuerkopf, the tribune, had exclaimed, with much satisfaction, to his friends, " Didn't I tell you so ? " and the two friends had answered triumphantly, " You told us so." When the wind began to blow Feuerkopf had turned up his coat collar and dug his hands in his pockets, crying out, " I foresaw it ; " to which his friends, imitating his movements, had replied, " You foresaw it ? " When the rain had begun to pour the trio had been doused to the skin, but they had laughed derisively, feeling much less wet themselves from thinking how extremely wet the aristocracy must be. It will not do to forget the few moments of pure pleasure which all three experienced splashing through the mud homewards, at the sight of the devastation wrought among slate and chimney-pots. So many chimney-pots fallen ; so many points against the upper classes who endeavour to crush the people. This democratic thought lightened the rest of their journey to the public-house, where they intended drinking brandy-and-water first, and devoting themselves to their country's good afterwards.

It was a favourite public-house and the crowd was already great there. Feuerkopf was received with loud cheers, slapped on the back, conducted to the best seat near the fire, and helped to a glass of " hot with, " paid for by a down-trodden proletary ; for when an agitator is good enough to plead the wants of the poor, nothing is juster than that he should refresh himself at their expense. When Feuerkopf had drunk, he dried his clothes ; then he drank again at the cost of a second proletary, climbed on a chair, and silence having been obtained by everybody crying " hush ! " at once, delivered a speech which lasted two hours. He told the company, in very eloquent language, that they were as the slough of the earth in the estimation of most persons ; that they had been lying on their stomachs for an incalculable series of years, and would have lain there to all time had he not arisen to pull them up ; that he had done this from philanthropy, nothing else ; and that being ignorant, but intelligent, they would prove their sense by confiding in him, and in no one besides : other people being suspicious brothers generally, and not to be trusted. Speaking was dry work, and he would accept a third glass of refreshment.

Then up rose Ganzbrenner, who barked that Feuerkopf was to be trusted, and so was he, Ganzbrenner ; in fact, they were both to be trusted, for they were going to abolish winter, which had been devised only for the hurt of the working man and for the profit of the bloated corporation of cough lozenge vendors. At this there was rapturous cheering ; but one is sorry to state that a retailer of hot chestnuts, who up to that moment had never given cause for mistrust, seemed suddenly struck by the notion that if winter were suppressed the chestnut trade would suffer, and accordingly lifted up his voice in protest. He was most properly ejected with every form of ignominy, and his case pointed a moral for Herr Ganzbrenner, who failed not to dilate on those wolves who clothed themselves like asses—he meant to say like sheep—the better to

seduce the people. After this came the turn of young Bundel, who was a mooncalf, but an earnest mooncalf, who said all he had to say dismally, as if he believed in it, which perhaps he did, though the thing is not common. To him succeeded, for the second time, Feuerkopf, whose ardent flame never flagged. He spoke for another hour, and the gist of his much-applauded remarks was this:—1. That a subscription should be raised. 2. That he, Feuerkopf, would kindly act as treasurer. 3. That agitators should be expedited to all parts of the country, and paid by him, Feuerkopf, at his discretion out of the subscription money. 4. That he himself should be Central Agitator, and also remunerate himself at his discretion out of the subscription funds. 5. That the party programme should comprise:—*a*. The total abolition of winter and summer; *b*. The division of the year into two semestrial seasons, spring and autumn; *c*. Suppression of frost, snow, ice, hail, and cold winds; *d*. Abrogation of the degrading privileges by which certain days were allowed to enjoy more sunlight than others,—every day in future to be divided into sixteen hours of light and eight of darkness; *e*. That there should always be moonshine to lessen this darkness; *f*. That whereas the sovereign people were exposed to be wetted through going to their work of a morning, and whereas umbrellas were expensive, it should no longer rain in the daytime, but only in the night; *g*. Abolition of solar eclipses, as a vain and frivolous institution, perpetuated for the amusement of the rich, who gazed at the sun through bits of darkened glass; whilst the people, not being able to afford darkened glass, were reduced to wondering what was the matter. 6. That a million copies of this programme should be struck off by a friendly printer there present, who would accept a bill, payable when the sovereign people should be in possession of the government. 7. That the first instalment of the subscription should be produced by everybody in the room at once.

All these clauses were loudly acclaimed with the exception of the last, which was acclaimed less loudly. But a voice, which afterwards proved to be the printer's, was heard clamouring in a corner, that if summer were abolished, the water in the rivers would never be warm enough to admit of bathing. This gave rise to a disturbance, at the end of which the printer was sent head foremost to rejoin the hot chestnut man, for it was, it was evident, firstly, that any suggestion to the effect that a downtrodden proletary could have the time or the wish to bathe was a gratuitous piece of irony at the expense of the sovereign people; and, secondly, that the interruption must be regarded as a subterfuge intended to cloak the printer's reluctance to strike off the programmes and accept the down-trodden proletary's note of hand. One would have been pleased to record that the incident passed off without any further disagreeableness; but there is no concealing that three of the proletaries who went out to eject the printer thought good not to return, thus lending a colour to the withering suspicion that their zeal was nothing but a pretext for evading the payment of their subscriptions. To prevent the recurrence of any such mean

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treason to the general cause, Herr Feuerkopf went and stood by the door with somebody else's hat in his hand, and each man as he filed by dropped in his offering. When the last man had so done, Herr Feuerkopf emptied the whole into his handkerchief, tied it up very neatly in a bundle, committed it to his pocket and proclaimed the meeting adjourned *sine die*. He also put on his head the hat he had borrowed, and which was better than his own, which he left in exchange. Between brothers all things should be in common.

But whilst the friends of the sovereign people were plotting it must not be supposed that the great Umbrella Interest was idle. Extreme dissatisfaction had been caused by the rain on the holiday, for as it had been unforeseen there had been no means of turning it to a profitable account; and to make matters worse, the Government, disregarding a solemn promise made to the Umbrella Interest that there should be rain on the two days following the transfer, had suspended all pluvial orders for a month, contending that the country had had quite enough sopping as it was. So the Umbrella Interest met in great force at the house of Herr Gingheim, the most influential man of the party, and a member of the Reichsrath, to consider measures and vote resolutions. Representatives of the Galosh Waterproof Cork-sole and Flannel Waistcoat Interests had also been invited to attend, and so had several Cough Lozenge Manufacturers; but the sale of cough lozenges having been exceedingly brisk ever since the holiday, the manufacturers of that specific had declined pledging themselves to any course of action condemnatory of the general policy of Government. The rest of the meeting, however, made up for this defection by their own warmth and onemindedness. Herr Gingheim having been unanimously voted into the chair, full a score of speeches were delivered all containing the same things, and all equally applauded. Then the following resolution, being put from the chair, was carried *nem. con.* amidst loud, long, and continued cheering:—

“ That this meeting views with alarm and consternation any proposals to subvert the ancient climate of Nevelundregenstein. Unchanged from time immemorial, suited to the temperament of the people, conspicuously free from the extremes of heat and cold, which are a source of annoyance, regret, and often of disaster to other countries, the climate of Nevelundregenstein has long been the envy and admiration of the world. In an age when history has brought within the knowledge of all the calamities, sufferings, and consequent moral deterioration of the natives of less temperate climes; in a century when famines, deadly pestilences, and droughts have from time to time arisen as though to warn the world that perfect happiness and comfort were not to be found outside a wise and just regulation of the thermometer, that assuredly would be a ruthless act which should tend to the destruction of the only climate on the globe, which, by its properties, at once mild and bracing, has contributed to the rearing of a hardy race and thus served to promote freedom, develop commerce, and aid the interests of true religion. This meeting pledges itself by every

constitutional means to oppose all attempts to change the climate of Nevelundregenstein. It regards the climate as the keystone to the national prosperity, and, personally interested in its maintenance by the support which the Umbrella, Galosh, Waterproof, Cork Sole and Flannel Waistcoat trades have ever derived from its influence, it deputes twelve members respectfully to remonstrate with his Serene Highness's Government against any legislation likely to affect the revered palladium of public trade, morals and liberties."

This resolution, engrossed on vellum, was ordered to be carried by a deputation to the Clerk of the Weather on the very next day or as soon after as they could obtain an audience; and the memorialists were specially enjoined to ask of the Government, categorically, what were its schemes as to future weather legislation. Truth to say, however, the Government had no schemes; and the only assurance that could be drawn from the Clerk of the Weather, who received the deputation with every courtesy, was that the Government intended to give the whole subject its most attentive consideration. Translated into common German, this meant simply that the Government were waiting. Waiting for what? Well, to see what the Opposition would do. In Nevelundregenstein the Government and the Opposition were always waiting for one another. Waiting round a corner, as one may say, and watching. If the Opposition had originated a policy without knowing what was the Government's plan, there would have been every chance that the Government would have adopted this policy and remained in office an indefinite period, which would have been a most painful and humiliating catastrophe. If, on the other hand, Government had shown their own cards without some endeavour to peer into their adversaries' game, how make sure that on the display of the first card the Opposition would not immediately throw down a trump in the shape of a higher bid for popular favour? Therefore, in this weather business, for instance, the Cabinet kept its eye open and its mouth shut. Herr von Vielsprechen, the Prime-Minister, looked anxiously for some indication of policy on the part of Herr von Sprechenviel, leader of the Opposition; and Herr von Sprechenviel gave no further indication than by setting up one of the members of the Out party to move "that in the opinion of this House the arrangements for the recent public holiday had not been carried out in such a way as to ensure the comfort of his Serene Highness's liege subjects, and that, considering the number of slates and chimneypots which had been destroyed on and about the houses in Nevelstadt by the mismanagement of his Serene Highness's responsible advisers, his Highness should be humbly petitioned to direct that a sum of money should be graciously paid out of the public taxes as compensation to the proprietors of the slates and chimneypots aforesaid, and that this House would undertake to make good the same." This was an unofficial way of moving a vote of want of confidence. The Government declared that they made a cabinet question of the matter, and in due course the motion

was defeated. Fortunately the Government had not waged battle by avowing that the Weather Department had committed a blunder, apologizing for it, and craving indulgence on the score of its being a first fault. This would have been a pre-Adamite way of doing things and simple to boobiness. Entrenching themselves on the high and impregnable ground that the object of all the weather festivities had been to manifest the power of the duchy over the elements, and declining with perfect dignity to enter into any controversy on the irrelevant issue as to whether the people of Nevelstadt had been soaked through or not, the Government victoriously proved that they had asserted their power over the elements quite as thoroughly by causing it to rain as they would have done by causing it to be fine, and that consequently all the ends in view had been compassed. The majority of the House having expressed entire concurrence with this mode of looking at the case, the clerk who had let the north wind loose was, on the day following the debate, promoted, whilst the other clerk who had sought to undo the error, was disgraced, fined in a sum of money, and held responsible for all the day's damage, to teach him what *esprit de corps* was.

After this defeat, which the Out Party had quite expected, and which did not concern them much, seeing that the dousing of the public was at the best but a small and not a great party question; after this Herr von Sprechenviel's next symptom of life was to put up a second one of his followers to make a cautiously-worded inquiry as to when the reports of a certain Ducal Commission which had been sent out to examine the weather in all parts of the globe, and to write thereon, would be laid on the table of the House. To this Herr von Vielsprechen, the Premier, answered, with equal caution, that he was not in a position to commit himself to any direct reply as to the precise time when such and such a thing would or would not take place; that the Ducal Commission had not yet returned; and that he would not take upon himself to say at what date it was likely to return; but that, so far as it was prudent to prejudge a future event, there was a strong probability that the Commission *would* return, and that when it had done so, he had every hope that, if nothing happened to the contrary, it would be in his power to lay before the House the papers for which the right honourable gentleman asked. This answer was made at the beginning of a week, and before the end of it the Commission, taking everybody aback by its celerity, actually had returned. It had only been away about a year, had visited sixty-six countries, examined five thousand seven hundred and twenty-three witnesses, and was now prepared to supply most valuable information. Thus it would demonstrate beyond doubt that it froze at St. Petersburg in December and January; that the mean temperature of a Calcutta summer was higher than one at Copenhagen, and that an ordinary pint pot left in the open air at Seville on a day when it rained would fill in about half-an-hour. These new facts were consigned in manuscripts which made four-and-twenty quarto volumes of print, copies of which were laid on the table of both Houses

of the Reichsrath, and distributed among all the members at the public expense. Then those among the members who cared to be instructed, having cut some of the leaves of these volumes and dipped into them, meetings were held in the coffee-rooms of the House, groups gathered in the lobbies and passages to whisper, and one night Herr von Vielsprechen, the Premier, was formally asked by Herr von Sprechenviel what action the Government purposed to take on the able reports which they had all perused with so much interest. Whereupon Herr von Vielsprechen replied that he had not quite made up his mind; that he would see, but that he hoped the Government would at no distant date be able to introduce a moderate and conciliatory measure of weather reform.

At no distant date! This is all very well when time is our own to fill up as we please; but now and then we are forced to bestir ourselves sooner than we had contemplated, and so it was in this case. That was no wild-goose chase, the agitation on which the valiant Feuerkopf, Ganzbrenner, and young Bundel had set out. Agitation as an art was still in its infancy among the Nevelundregensteiners; but the principles of the art, its practice, and its certain results where perseverance is employed, are patent to the meanest intellect, and the intellect of Feuerkopf was not of the meanest. History had taught him, and his own wit would have done so if history had not, that a small and turbulent minority, no matter how husky, dusky, and flat-headed (and perhaps the more conspicuous from these peculiarities the better), have only to set their minds upon a thing to get it, if they only shout loud enough and in chorus. So Feuerkopf shouted—shouted like the *Mycetes Ursinus*, or howling monkey, which naturalists tell us has a voice of frightful volume and power—shouted in the open air, and amid close air, from cab-tops, from the lids of tubs, from everywhere. And Ganzbrenner, and young Bundel, and fifty more scattered about the Duchy to exert their lungs at so much per diem—shouted, too, so that it never occurred to anybody to exclaim: "Here are men who earn their living by shouting, just as others by shoe-making; let us pass on;" but this being an age of thought, everybody reflected—"Here are men who shout; it must be that conviction and the sense of our grievances burn strongly within them; their voices are unpleasant, but their intentions are good; let us stop and listen." Whence, as stopping to listen is, in meteorology as in polities, the almost invariable prelude to joining in the music, many a person, who had simply wished at first that the weather might be a little brighter, felt, on hearing young Bundel declaim his philippics against Winter, that it must be a clever advocate indeed who could make out a case for such a preposterous institution. So in time each paid agitator stirred up a swarm of amateur agitators, who shouted even louder than their models, free service being always lustier than salaried; and these amateurs again set fire to herds of others, until everybody in the land seemed shouting, and Winter and Summer had both got as bad names as a pair of dogs to be hanged. Then Feuerkopf, grown brave in new boots, good clothes, and authentic linen,

paid for by the down-trodden Proletary, took to leading mobs into the ducal park amid flowers, nursemaids, and grass-plots, to vow that Winter and Summer *should* be hanged ! A hundred sites more commodious than this grassy garden could, by the way, have been found ; but Feuerkopf insisted upon frightening the nursemaids ; and as nothing in the laws of the duchy interfered with this very reasonable desire, he was suffered to have his way. It may be remarked that few things were more characteristic of the freedom of Nevelundregenstein than the prerogative enjoyed by any gathering of ragamuffins to inconvenience twice or thrice their number of respectable people.

There would, perhaps, be cruelty in analyzing the emotions of his Serene Highness's ministers amidst the agitations which had bubbled up so unawares, and were now eddying round them with such fury. Suffice it to say that, profoundly impressed with the necessity of conserving intact in its fundamental elements the climate of Nevelundregenstein, they yet felt no less profoundly impressed with the advisability of keeping intact their own seats in the Cabinet ; and perceiving that no means lay open to this end but by presenting a Weather Bill, did so, not in "due time," or "at no distant date," but with post expedition. It was the Clerk of the Weather who introduced the measure, dwelling with emotion on its merits, and, certes, if ever a bill had been framed with a view to its fitting in neatly with the tastes and prejudices of everybody, this was that Bill. For had not the proletary's needs been consulted by the reduction of the winter and summer seasons from three months to two, by the abolition of all extra-hivernian frost, of snows and hail-storms, and by the suppression of rain on Sundays ? And, on the other hand, had it not been honestly sought to propitiate the fractions of the Great Out Party, the Umbrella Interest, the Cork Sole Interest, and even the exclusively aristocratic section of Skaters, by clauses making every provision for rain and damp (the Bill called it "salutary moisture"), and by one enacting that for three weeks in every winter all the lakes, rivers, and ponds of the Duchy should be ice-bound ? As the Clerk of the Weather most truly put it, this Bill in nowise aimed at subverting the climate—it improved and invigorated it. Instead of a climate complicated, capricious, and incomprehensible in its operations, one would now have a climate based on definite principles, reduced to an orderly system, and designed to meet the requirements of every class of his Highness's subjects. It was a climate that would tend to the diminution of disease, the promotion of domestic cheerfulness, the furtherance of trade, and the amelioration of agriculture. It would be a boon at once to the cottage and the palace, the workshop and the farmyard. It would be cherished and maintained so long as the name of Nevelundregenstein existed, and diffuse health and happiness more and more over a smiling land.

This is what the Ins said ; but he who hears but one bell catches but one sound, says the byword, and one must now listen a moment to what the Outs responded. To sum it all up, the case lay in a nutshell. Any

support of the Government measure was out of the question, for if once the Opposition took to backing Government Bills, what would be the use or the sense of Parliamentary government? There stood, then, but two alternatives, either to fight the measure as too thorough, or to scout it as not enough so. The former would have been the more congenial course, and a picture of Winter set up in his old age as a butt for the most miserable assaults, would have been one of those fine things at which no Reichsrath of educated gentlemen could have sat insensible. But, then, what chance would the Great Out Party have had between the Feuerkopf agitators on the one side and the United In Benches on the other? Evidently none; and, therefore, the only prudent and politic course was to enter into a bond of amity with the agitators, or, rather, with the friends of them in the Reichsrath, and, flanked by the forces of these champions of the public good, to pit against the Clerk of the Weather's Bill a counter one, reducing the winter and summer seasons to one month each instead of two. All this Herr von Sprechenviel explained to his friends with his usual good grace and persuasiveness. To the Great Umbrella Interest he proved without difficulty that a wet autumn can be made much more productive than a frosty winter; to the Cork Sole faction he dilated on the advantages of a humid spring, and the same damp inducements held good in the case of the Galosh Interest, the Waterproof Sellers, and the Makers of Flannel Waistcoats. The only section who refused to be beguiled were the Skating Party, and these, taking a narrow-minded view of the subject, were pleased to declare that any tactics resulting in the prescription of ice were a dishonourable treason, and to secede with arms and baggage. This, however, did not prevent the Out Party from seeing their gallant efforts at out-bidding crowned with well-earned success. There was wailing and confusion in the camp of the Ins, for the President of the Chamber proclaimed one night that the "Noes" had it, and Herr von Vielsprechen exchanged places with Herr von Sprechenviel.

IV.

A space of time has elapsed, how long does not signify, but long enough to change the face of Nevelundregenstein. Once again we are in the town mansion of the Frau Gräfin von Rosenblatter, and once again is her ladyship waiting for a new dress which ought to have been brought many hours before, but which has not been brought, there being no change in the remissness of dressmakers. At last, however, the dress arrives, but what an alteration in that dress! and, now we come to look at her, what an alteration in the Gräfin and in her house, her servants, her rooms, her furniture, and in everything that is hers! No signs of carpets to-day, nor fire-places, gloves, furs, nor footmen with powder in their hair. Carl, the first footman, promoted to be butler, is fanning a face tanned as brown as a pfennig with a fan which he slips into the muslin girdle of his tunic as a palanquin, borne by two ex-cabdrivers,

moves up to the front door and discharges a lady a yard-and-a-half in circumference across the—bust. It is the dressmaker, the Frau Nadelstitcher, pupil of Frau Bundel, retired from business. Conrad, late second, now first footman, recognizes her, moves across the hall with all the alacrity which his own girth will permit, and, according to the new and courteous usage of the country, conducts her to a marble basin in a corner, and pours a canful of iced water over her head, Carl the butler standing by and fluttering his fan over the Frau Nadelstitcher during the operation. Not a word is exchanged, for breath has become scarce; but when the Frau Nadelstitcher has dried her hair in a soft towel, sucked a lemon, and rested five minutes on a cane-bottomed stool, Carl the butler supports her by one arm, Conrad the first footman by the other, and Maximilian, the second footman, takes the dress which the Frau Nadelstitcher has brought; then the whole procession waddles in slow time up the staircase to the Frau Gräfin's apartments. There are no doors to knock at. A long cashmere hanging is drawn aside, and the Countess is seen reclining on a heap of cushions in the centre of a room with marble slabs in guise of paper on the walls and a tesselated flooring. Two sun-brown small boys on their knees are gently fanning her and mopping their own brows, turn by turn, with pocket-handkerchiefs. The Frau Nadelstitcher subsides exhausted on to a square piece of matting which Carl the butler disposes for her, and calls faintly for a fresh lemon, which is at once supplied her. The Countess languidly opens her eyes at the sound of collapse, and makes a laudable effort to sit up; but there is no blinking the fact that her once slim ladyship's girth now rivals that of the Frau Nadelstitcher, so she sinks back, and feebly touches a hand-bell to summon her maids. Then the butler, footmen, and small boys all vanish, and the two ladies are left alone, both silently sucking lemons.

Now what on earth does all this mean? Why should the Countess's face, whilom so pink and oval, resemble nothing so much as (pardon the disrespectful simile) an overboiled pudding? Why this consumption of lemons, these small boys, these footmen in linen tunics and destitute of any piece of attire requiring braces? Why should it need two maids to set her ladyship standing, and another two to try on her new gown, which—for all the needle-craft and fashioning it displays—might just as well have been imagined in an age when sewing-machines were not invented. It is a simple silk peplum, dyed blue, and to be worn loose with an over-robe of lawn and a tulle veil and hood instead of bonnet. It is not dazzling, but appears to be cool and comfortable, for the Countess is wearing another like it, and so is the Frau Nadelstitcher, whose attire, however, is of humbler materials, for social distinctions must be observed. But, once again, what does all this mean? It means that the weather is hot in Nevelstadt. But how comes the weather to be so hot? Ah! that is the question. And yet we will tell the truth. Exciting as the story may be, and strong as may be one's reluctance to recall it, a chronicler should disguise nothing.

It all began, then, with the Weather Bill—intempestive and tempestuous Weather Bill as some small joker said. The Outs, triumphant over the Ins by the adroitness of their strategy, had succeeded in attaining power, and nothing could shake the conviction of the ex-Ins that tactics more double-dealing, ungenerous and thoroughly discreditable, had never been seen. That Ins should adopt opinions broached by Outs nothing fairer; but that Outs should appropriate a policy that had germinated in the minds of the Ins, what could be the moral condition of a party from whom such things were possible? It was calculated that the homilies published by In newspapers on the topic of Out profligacy would have formed a paper girdle to go right round the globe with remnant enough to tie a fine bow with streamers ten miles long at the point where the ends met. But homilying did not prevent the ex-Ins from keeping their eyes to the main chance; and, persuaded that no more effective means could be found of showing the ex-Outs their blackness than by doing to them even as they themselves had done, a campaign was opened to war-cry of "Down with winter altogether! No more frosts for the working man!" Some bolder spirits of the party would have added, "Down with summer too!" but the leader judiciously explained that one should always keep some forces in reserve, and that the "Down with summer!" might be very useful another time. Needless to depict the despairing resistance of the ex-Outs, their contortions were no avail. Deserted by the Feuerkopfites who had lifted them into office, and helped to keep them there, they surrendered at discretion. But from this date one thing became patent in Nevelundregenstein. It was no longer the two great parties of Out and In who shaped the public policy, but mainly the Feuerkopfites. Standing like so many balls of quicksilver, and ready to oscillate to the right or the left, these heroes formed the body, whose weight just swayed the political balance. It was no use trying to do without them—there they were, permanently stricken with the *delirium ululans*, and they could not be done without. First one fragment of climate was improved away at their bidding, then another. Sops were thrown then in the way of posts of emolument, and it was hoped that, because one Feuerkopfite was gratified with a public salary, all the other Feuerkopfites would hold themselves satisfied. But if it be a fond thing to expect that by tendering a marrow-bone to one dog in a kennel all the other dogs in the kennel will get their hunger sated, how much more so then was it to anticipate that the sop system could lead to any other result than that of multiplying the Feuerkopfites indefinitely until they became as a swarm of locusts swooping down periodically on all the good things of Nevelundregenstein? Then men with shaggy heads, strange voices, and nebulous antecedents, began to crop up in posts of trust. The old party denomination of In and Out gave way to those of the Great Umbrella and Parasol factions; and the Duchy of N., thriving under their valorous contests, underwent now six months of unremitting rain, now twelve months of ceaseless drought. Soon the hitherto half ignored, but easily acquired science of turning the

climate to account as an engine of persuasion on political adversaries rose in honour. The Ministers of the day would drench the lands, tenements, and habitations of their rivals with deluges of sleet, or decimate them with thunderbolts, or drive them into exile by means of big hailstones. Occasionally some Minister would arise, who, having climbed to power by a more than usually fatiguing course of agitation, and feeling the need for rest, would earnestly plead to be allowed to govern in peace. But this unselfish request would be disregarded, and the warfare would recommence with redoubled ardour, cabinets succeeding each other apace, and people marvelling much at the impudence of any Minister who hoped to escape the common lot of being carried to power by acclamation on a Monday, and being forced to fly for his life on the following Saturday, or sooner. For now everybody aspired at some time or other, and in some way or other, to serve his country, *i.e.*, live at its expense. By a wise Act passed in the In and Out days, every child in the Duchy was required to be taught a smattering of meteorology; and as no man with a smattering of anything was ever known to feel otherwise than profoundly convinced of his superiority over all the other besmattereds, it stood to reason that no sooner was a young hopeful able to explain how rain was procured than he grew conscious of a vocation to manage the State barometer all by himself. Hence the yearly increasing agitations for objects more and more undreamed of, that man alone being accounted a being of promise who could suggest something altogether new in the way of legislation. After the climate had been broken up, remodelled, turned inside out, and made to pass through as many variations as a classic fugue in the hands of an inspired pianist, experiments were tried in other fields. Women, married or otherwise, were enfranchised, then brought into the Reichsrath, then gratified with two votes instead of one, then privileged to speak out of their turn (a prerogative which, be it recorded, they had assumed from the first without asking leave). After that it was felt that lunatics and imbeciles had been unjustly dealt by, and a champion arose who procured them a vote apiece, carried a Bill allotting them ten seats in the house, and at least one in the Cabinet. The climax of equality and progress was attained when a Society was formed to agitate for the enfranchisement of prisoners in gaols, and convicts in penal settlements—two injured classes. That was a proud day when the Philokleptic Society saw a genuine convict, with head close cropped, take his seat in the House as a representative of the Hulk interests.

Such had for a good while been the state of things in Nevelundregenstein on the day when we intrude upon the Frau Gräfin von Rosenblatter, being fanned in her drawing-room. Government had, at that time, by a consecutive series of reforms, come to be the bone of contention between two new great parties, the Drug and the Muff. The Drug, so called from its being chiefly recruited among the importers of quinine and other febrifuge medicines, was now in the ascendant, and, as it is easy to guess the head and front of its policy might be summed up in the words "Dog

Days." Whilst the Drugs ruled it was tropical heat all the year round, dogs went mad as in duty bound, hospitals were filled, the Reichsrath appointed commissions to inquire into the causes of sun-stroke, and the quinine trade waxed prosperous. Contrariwise when the Muffs were having their innings, wine froze in the cellars, area railings snapped like twigs, the Reichsrath instituted a prize for the best curative essay on chilblains, and all legislation was directed towards the advancement of the fur trade. When we find the Countess, the Drugs, evincing a stability long unexampled, had been in office two years, which accounts for the plethoric and rather comatose condition of her ladyship and attendants.

The Countess, having languidly admired her new gown, toddled with it to a looking-glass to admire it a little better. She was going to a grand review, to be passed that day by the Chief of the Executive, President, Dictator, or something of the kind (for of course the ducal crown had long gone the way of all other institutions), and as she looked into the mirror over the rim of the orange which she had begun to suck, as a change from the lemon, she could not help wondering whether that odious Countess of Lilienblume (who had grown so fat, said she, pityingly, that there was no knowing her) would be as well dressed as she. Carl, the butler, appeared at this juncture, behind the door-hangings, to announce that the General von Bundel had called to see her ladyship. "Show up General von Bundel," she murmured resignedly, and, with the help of her maids, went to resume her place upon the cushions.

General von Bundel was shown up. Yes, it was the same who had been young Bundel in former days, and the son of the dressmaker. But he was no longer young Bundel now. He had been twice Clerk of the weather, general, admiral, chief justice, and what not, and was now one of the respected leaders of the Muff party—that is, an advocate of winter in its utmost rigour, for a man should never scruple to abandon his former convictions when they cease to suit him. His mother, Frau Bundel, had also, by her son's instrumentality, held various high offices of trust, and, had the second Bundel Administration lasted, it was rumoured that the Presidency of the Upper House of the Reichsrath would have been graciously accepted by her. General Bundel strode majestically up to the Countess, imprinted a kiss upon her white hand, and confided to her without much further preface, for he had confidence in her ladyship, that Nevelundregenstein was once more on the eve of important events, that he, Bundel, had returned from exile on purpose to take a share in them, and that there would probably be a mutiny of all the troops that day at the review.

"Oh, dear," groaned the Countess, wearily, "more fighting!"

"Yes," answered the trusty Bundel, touching the hilt of a very ferocious sabre, "the time has come when this country must free itself from the worst of all tyrannies—that of the proletary. For what is the proletary but the concrete essence of all that is ignorant and base in a State? The proletary has been having it all his own way in Nevelundregenstein; the proletary must be kept under foot."

"I have always thought so," sighed the Countess, approvingly.

She rather liked von Bundel, did the Countess. In those early days, when she had sent him the Bishop of Nevelstad's tract to warn him against the evil courses of revolutionaryism, she had begun to take an interest in him, and this interest had expanded, by-and-by when the fact of the Gräfin von Lilienblume being an admirer of the In party had caused her, the Gräfin von Rosenblatter, to sympathize with the Outs, coquette a little with the Feuerkopf agitators, invite some of them to her rout, and thus pave the way for young Bundel's first footsteps into decent society. Alas! there were no routs now; but young Bundel remained, and he had requited his patroness's kindnesses by always sending sunshine upon her path when he was in power, and occasional showers of rain when she asked for them. He had also one day, to please her, turned on a smart downpour of cats and dogs to spoil one of the Countess von Lilienblume's garden-parties. Such services are not easily forgotten; they knit generous hearts together in a bond of mutual esteem and good fellowship, and beget a tender understanding. The General soon communicated to the Countess that his old chief (then his rival, then his friend again), Feuerkopf, intended overthrowing the Government by military means—what the Spaniards call a pronunciamento, but that instead of placing Feuerkopf at the head of the Government, as had been agreed upon between them, he, Bundel, had privately resolved to betray Feuerkopf, have him shot if possible, and restore to the throne the exiled ducal house, a scion of which he had brought across the frontier in a ventilated deal box with him.

"I shall be acting solely for the public good," concluded he, "and my services will be entirely disinterested. A dukedom, a pension, may-be a seat in the Cabinet, and the satisfaction of having done my duty to my country, is all the remuneration I shall ask for."

"Oh, if you could only bring us back our old weather!" ejaculated the Countess, whose face had flushed with something like a show of excitement at the promise of a ducal restoration. "At all events, you will do away with this heat, won't you? You see how I am thinning under it."

The General didn't quite appear to see it, but he replied: "Certainly the heat shall cease—and now I think it is time to go to the review. I heard the clarion's sound and the tramp of your palanquin men at the door."

Horses not being able to stand the sort of weather which Nevelundrengensteiner was enjoying, it was men who did their work. So the Countess was carried through the streets of the once prosperous capital in a gilded box, whilst the General tramped behind her with a muslin comforter over his manly face, to conceal him from the Drug policemen. In this guise they proceeded to the ex-ducal park, where twenty thousand Nevelundrengensteiner soldiers were drawn up in array, with parasols stuck into the muzzles of their rifles to keep the sun's heat off them. The Countess, one of ten thousand spectators in palanquins and light raiment like her-

self, peeped out, holding an orange to her mouth, and whether it was that some of the juice of this fruit squirted itself into her blue eyes, or whether it was that a pang of humiliation and sorrow shot through her not very sensitive heart at the sight of the degradation into which the country had fallen, certain it is that at the moment when the Citizen-General Von Kartofelngesicht President, or whatever he was of the Nevelundregensteiner Commonwealth, rode down the lines on a dusty camel and addressed blandishing kisses on the hand towards the mob, her eyes filled with tears. In sooth it was a stewing overheated mob and did not cheer much, but stared fishily before it, fanning itself and not quite understanding the sight. It is clearly the privilege of much revolutionizing and reforming to raise man in the intellectual scale to quite as high a level as the pike.

Suddenly, however, when the dusty camel had got half-way down the lines somebody, with something on his head, stepped out from somewhere with a banner, and roared, "Down with Kartofelngesicht, the Drug Party, and the Heat! Long live Winter and Feuerkopf!" Mechanically, and as though by instinct, half the mob rallied round the banner; it was their habit to side with revolution, they couldn't help it. The other half remained uncertain. Kartofelngesicht, on his dusty camel and pale in the face, rode straight at the banner-man and roared, "Long live the Drug Party; friends to the proletary. Down with sedition." The rest was lost in the tumult of fighting, for everybody who was there flew from custom at the throat of his neighbour, and there was one of those pleasant little rows which had become a second nature to the country. And then?

V.

Why, and then it is related in the chronicles of Nevelundregenstein that the old ducal family having been restored by the instrumentality of the loyal General von Bundel, who was created Duke of Wetterhahn for the good deed, public sacrifices were offered to Jupiter, to ask him to take back the weather management into his own hands, which Jupiter, after much praying, kindly consented to do. Impartiality compels one to add, however, that when under the influence of its old climate the Duchy had recovered its prosperity; there were still people who looked back with a tender recollection to the days when the country had alternately been suffocated by the heat to please the Drugs, or shrieked under the cold for the profit of the Muffs. They called these the good days, and, Heaven aiding, will continue to do so to time everlasting; for, as every one is aware, man is of all living creatures the one who profits most completely by the lessons of experience.

The "Cinque Maggio."^{*}

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MANZONI.

I.

He was. As still as lay
 The cold unconscious clay,
 When the last sigh of life had fled,
 Of that great soul distenanted,
 So, at the startling tale,
 The breathless world grows pale ;
 In silence stands to ponder o'er
 The fatal page closed evermore,
 Nor knows if it may be
 That mortal such as he
 Shall with red footfall stain
 The insulted dust again.

II.

In splendour, on his throne
 I saw him, and passed on :
 While Fortune, blending smile and frown,
 O'erthrew and raised and hurled him down,
 Amid the clamorous throng
 I scorned to wake my song :
 Unskilled to flatter or to sting,
 Incense nor outrage would I bring ;
 But when the lustre splendid
 In sudden darkness ended,
 Rose with a start to pay
 The tribute of my lay.

III.

From Alp to Pyramid,
 From Moscow to Madrid,
 His ready lightnings flashed and shone,
 Vaunt-couriers of the thunderstone,
 And lit that sea and this,
 Scylla and Tanais—
 Was this true glory ? Answer ye
 That are not, but that are to be :

* The anniversary of the death of the first Napoleon.

We at Thy footstool bow,
 Maker and Lord, for Thou
 Hast of Thy master-hand
 Never such marvel planned.

IV.

The stormy joys that fret
 The soul on greatness set,
 The yearning of the restless heart,
 That burns to play the imperial part,
 And wins a guerdon higher
 Than Madness durst desire—
 All this was his; 'twas his to claim
 For peril's meed yet greater fame;
 Flying, and conquering;
 An exile, and a king;
 Twice in the dust o'erthrown,
 Twice on the altar-stone.

V.

He uttered but his name,
 And at his bidding came
 Two warring centuries to wait
 Upon his pleasure as their fate;
 He set, with steadfast mien,
 His judgment-seat between;
 Then like a vision passed, and wore
 His life out on that narrow shore,
 A mark for boundless spite,
 And pity infinite,
 For hate as deep as Hell,
 And love invincible.

VI.

As whelm the waters dread
 The shipwrecked swimmer's head,
 While ever and anon his eye
 Strains upward in his agony,
 And sweeps the pitiless main
 For distant shores in vain,—
 So slowly o'er that sinking soul
 Did the full flood of memories roll;
 Oft on the eternal pages,
 Wherein to after-ages
 He strove his tale to tell,
 The listless fingers fell.

VII.

Oft, as the lazy day
 Died silently away,
 Earthward the flashing eye subdued,
 And with enfolded arms he stood,
 While o'er his thought was cast
 The shadow of the past ;
 Again the tented squadrons sprang
 To arms, again the ramparts rang ;
 Surged the bright ranks again,
 And wave of mounted men,
 And to the word of flame
 The instant answer came.

VIII.

Well might the spirit die
 In such an agony ;
 But, strong to succour, from above
 Came down a messenger of love,
 Raised him from his despair
 To breathe a purer air,
 And set his feet upon the way
 Where Hope's fair flowerets bloom for aye—
 To those eternal plains,
 Rich in unmeasured gains,
 Where man's brief glories fade
 In silence and in shade.

IX.

Oh, fair and healing Faith,
 Triumphant over Death,
 Write thou among thy victories
 That loftier majesty than his
 Ne'er bent in humbled pride
 To Christ the crucified :
 Let not the light or mocking word
 Be near the wearied ashes heard ;
 The Lord of weal and woe,
 Who raises and lays low,
 A living glory shed
 Around the desolate bed !

The English Sonnet.

THE Sonnet, as our readers know, owes its birth-place to Italy and its earliest fame to the exquisite productions of Petrarch. Dante, Tasso, and indeed all the worthiest poets of that land have composed sonnets of high, some of supreme excellence, but so readily does the Italian language adapt itself to this form of poetical composition, that the wit, the courtier, and the lover, became unfortunately as familiar with it as the poet, and in the sixteenth century, the infection spread so rapidly that, as Mr. Hallam has pointed out, it would demand the use of a library formed peculiarly for this purpose, as well as a vast expenditure of labour, to read the volumes which the Italians filled with their sonnets. For our purpose, at this time, there is only one point about the Italian sonnet that requires to be mentioned. In form it is what is generally known as legitimate, that is to say, the first eight lines, called the Octave, possess only two rhymes, and the six concluding lines, called the Sestette, never possess more than three. We may add that the poets of Italy were in the habit of closing the second quatrain with a full stop, so that with the ninth line commenced a new turn of thought.

The revival of intellectual activity in the sixteenth century, which produced such glorious fruit in this country, led, as was natural enough, to an ardent study of the best authors of Italy, and it is impossible to read any of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists without observing how vast and profound was the influence exercised over them by the wealth of fancy and imagination, of romantic narrative and history, stored up in the rich granary of Italian literature. Shakspeare, the greatest and most original writer of that age, or of any, lays the scenes of several of his plays on Italian soil, and derives the plots of them from Italian sources. For one he goes to Ariosto, for another to Boccaccio, for a third to Cinthio; and if we examine with this design the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Ben Jonson, of Massinger, of Webster, and of Ford, we shall be struck by their common partiality for the same fountain head. It is not wonderful, therefore, that our poets in their eager admiration of Italian literature, should have seized upon one of the most characteristic features of Italian poetry, and have transplanted the sonnet to their native land. They made it their own, however, in the process, gave to it greater elasticity, and produced in this shape such gems of English art, that it would be as reasonable to complain that English watches were not genuine, because the first watch was invented by a German, as that the sonnet does not form a genuine portion of English

verse, because the first sonnets were written by Italians. No doubt this idea has been encouraged by Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary* assertion, that the sonnet is not very suitable to the English language; but the worthlessness of the criticism is proved by the lexicographer's miserable estimate of Milton's majestic sonnets as deserving no particular comment, since "of the best it can only be said that they are not bad." It is a significant fact and an ample refutation of Dr. Johnson's belief that the structure of the English language is unfavourable to this kind of composition, that from Spenser downwards it has been employed, with scarcely an exception, by our greatest poets, and this not merely as a poetical exercise, but because in certain moods of feeling they found in it the fittest vehicle of expression.

Assuredly this was the case with Shakspeare, whose sonnets, illegitimate in shape, are marvels in their wealth of thought and felicity of language; with Milton, in whose hands "the thing became a trumpet;" with Wordsworth, who often felt it

— sunshine to be bound
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground;

and with Mrs. Barrett Browning, whose noble song never rings more musically, or touches deeper chords of feeling than when rounded by the fourteen lines which form the compass of the sonnet. It is a special advantage of this form of composition, that it necessitates the precision of language and the concentration of thought, which are of priceless value in poetry. In the sonnet every word should have a meaning—every line add to the beauty of the whole; and the exquisite delicacy of the workmanship should not lessen, but should rather assist in increasing the stability of the structure. A sonnet, brief though it be, is of infinite compass. What depth of emotion, what graceful fancy, what majestic organ notes, what soft flute-like music, is it incapable of expressing? The amatory sonneteers of Italy become frequently monotonous by harping too long upon one string, but in England our poets have rarely fallen into this error, and the variety to be found in the English sonnet is one of its great charms.

The earliest of our sonneteers—Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey—friends in life, as well as in the art they practised, acknowledged Petrarch as their master, and the latter, who has been termed "the English Petrarch," deserves attention for the harmony of his versification, as well as for his originality of thought. In avoiding the quirks and quibbles recommended by the example of the Italian poet, the unfortunate Surrey shows that he possessed good taste, as well as poetical feeling. Surrey was a mere boy when he was married to Lady Frances Vere; and the love that finds utterance in his verse is, doubtless, for the wife of his youth. He had, besides, a poetical mistress, the Lady Geraldine, whose name is almost as familiar to English ears as that of Petrarch's Laura; but since Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, the Geraldine

of the poet, was a mere child at the time when Surrey, a married man, professed to be dying for her love, it is evident that the fair girl had no real place in his affections. It was like the pretty love-making of Prior "To a Child of Quality":—

Nor quality nor reputation
Forbid me yet my flame to tell ;
Dear five years old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

She may receive and own my flame :
For though the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

For as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained (would fate but mend it !)
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it.

We may add, before dismissing Surrey, that if it be true, as has been suspected, that the deadly hate of King Henry VIII. was roused against him by his sonnet *On Sardanapalus*, the might wielded by the sonnet writer was early and fatally appreciated. "Drenched in sloth and womanish delight, feeble of spirit, impatient of pain," and enervated by "filthy lusts that stained his regal heart"—these are some of the terms used with regard to the Assyrian monarch which Henry might fitly apply to himself.

Surrey was executed in 1547, Wyatt died of a fever in 1542; but the births of Sir Walter Raleigh in 1552, and of Sir Philip Sidney in 1554—(men who added to the chivalric qualities which have made their names immortal, the gift of poesy) sustained the line of our sonneteers. Leigh Hunt points out, and the remark is noteworthy, that the "first three introducers of the sonnet in England, Sir Thomas Wyatt, the Earl of Surrey, and Sir Philip Sidney, were all knightly and accomplished men;" but it will be seen that he omits the name of Raleigh, who wrote one sonnet at least, that leaves upon the mind, as Mr. Hunt elsewhere acknowledges, the impression of triumphant force. The fame of these heroic men preserves their poetry, not their poetry their fame. But no reader can pass by with indifference Sir Walter Raleigh's bold and flattering judgment of the *Faerie Queene*, or Sidney's beautiful sonnet addressed *To Sleep*, or that to the Moon, remarkable for its fine opening:—

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face !

"The best of Sidney's sonnets," said Elia, with something of the generous exaggeration with which he was apt to write of the merits of our elder poets, "are among the very best of their sort;" and he adds

that "the verse runs off swiftly and gallantly," and "might have been tuned to the trumpet." Here is one written upon obtaining a prize at a tournament, admirably characteristic of the writer's style:—

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
 Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
 Both by the judgment of the English eyes
 And of some sent from that sweet enemy—France ;
 Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance ;
 Townsfolk my strength ; a daintier judge applies
 His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise ;
 Some lucky wits impute it but to chance ;
 Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in this,
 Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
 How far they shot awry ! The true cause is,
 Stella looked on ; and from her heavenly face
 Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Samuel Daniel, who pursued his studies under the patronage of Sir Philip Sidney's sister, was a true, although not a great poet, and the praise awarded to him by Coleridge is well deserved ; but his fifty-seven sonnets addressed to Delia demand notice only for two merits, ease of versification, and perfect purity of thought. Michael Drayton, who was born about the same year (1562) as Daniel, but long out-lived him, is the most voluminous writer of poetry in the language, and has many merits of no mean order. In his *Barons' Wars* he shows himself a vigorous and often picturesque chronicler in verse ; in his *Nymphidia* he exhibits a delightful play of fancy ; his *Battle of Agincourt* has as much vigour and *élan* as any English war lyric ; in his wonderful and well-nigh interminable poem *Poly-Olbion*, he wanders over England, as Charles Lamb has beautifully said, "with the fidelity of a herald, and the painful love of a son who has not left a rivulet so narrow that it may be stepped over without honourable mention, and has animated hills and streams with life and passion above the dreams of old mythology ?" Sir Walter Scott, in his *Life of Dryden*, makes the extraordinary assertion that Drayton, though less known than Spenser, "possessed, perhaps equal powers of poetry." No one who has wandered with Spenser through his Faerie Land to the sound of exquisite music, seeing visions such as few poets have dreamed of, and none described with such prodigal felicity of language, and has then trudged painfully along the by-ways of England, although not without compensation for the toil, with the poet of the *Poly-Olbion*, can compare the two for a moment. But Drayton has written sonnets ; and, in spite of Leigh Hunt's assertion, that they are destitute of poetry, we venture to think that one of them is so remarkable for imagery and tender feeling, as to deserve a place among the loveliest poems of its class. Those of our readers who are familiar with the piece will be willing to read it once again ; and

to those who are not we may hint that they are unlikely to do it justice by a single perusal :—

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part :
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me ;
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free ;
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
 And, when we meet at any time again,
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
 When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes,
 Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover !

But the greatest of all Shakspeare's poetical contemporaries and his predecessor in the art of sonnet-writing was the divine Spenser,—the poet's poet, as he has been truly called, whose *Faerie Queene*, notwithstanding its tedious allegory and its frequent archaisms, is the joy of all true lovers of poetry. One of the chief characteristics of Spenser's genius is expansiveness. His free foot cannot be confined within a narrow territory. So fertile is his imagination, so lively his fancy, that unless he have an ample space over which to wander at will, and in contempt sometimes of the laws that bind other poets, he loses half his might. Spenser is a poetical democrat ; precedent is nothing to him ; he must do as seems good in his own eyes, or his song will be impotent to charm. Such a poet was not likely to submit readily to the seeming bondage of the sonnet. Wordsworth found in its brief space true solace and delight, and proved a perfect master of the instrument upon which he played ; but Spenser, although using to the full the licence of the times, appears, even in his loose sonneteering, to be like a man who is cramped and fettered with unaccustomed garments. These sonnets, eighty-eight in number, sing the cruelty and charms of his mistress in the conventional style so frequently adopted in that age. Her beauty is dissected in fantastical phraseology ; her eyes, her teeth, her breath, her smile, her frown, are compared with lightning, with pearls, with the scent of flowers, with sunshine, with storms. The hardest steel wears in time, he says, but nothing can soften her hard heart ; the lion despairs to devour the lamb, but she, more savage wild, "taketh glory in her cruelty ;" she is a new Pandora, sent to scourge mankind ; she is an angler, catching weak hearts, and then killing them with cruel pride ; she is like a panther, who allures other beasts with his beauty, and then preys upon them. At the same time, she is her lover's sovereign saint, the idol of his thoughts, born "of the brood of angels," the Fairest Fair, who contains within herself all the world's riches, and her bosom is—

The nest of Love, the lodging of Delight,
The bower of Bliss, the paradise of Pleasure.

Spenser's biographers, like Shakspeare's, in the dearth of much actual knowledge, have searched the poet's sonnets for additional information. The pursuit is alluring, but dangerous. The highest truths of poetry are generally uttered through a fictitious medium, but in the Elizabethan age the poet, following the fashion of the time, was ready to invent a love-passion and to create a mistress in order to serve the purposes of his verse. Spenser, it would seem, courted his divinity at the mature age of forty, and one feels quite sure that at that age no man with any mettle in him would undergo in reality the agonies Spenser underwent in *verse* for the sake of an obdurate mistress. It was the style of poetical phraseology current in that day, and Spenser made use of it, like others, without a feeling of its worthlessness such as we may harbour now. If these remarks were not generally true, it would speak ill, indeed, for the morality of the sonnet-writers. Petrarch's *Laura*, like Dante's *Beatrice*, were married women. Sir Philip Sidney's love-sonnets were addressed to Lady Rich, and were published in her own and her husband's life-time; and although Spenser's are as pure as the rest of his poetry, and were dedicated to a real woman, it is evident that the larger portion of them, written as they are in the artificial diction of the period, must be chiefly regarded as clever exercises in *verse*. His heart was not in them as it is in the incomparable *Epithalamion*, one of the loveliest surely of all lovely poems, which he sang upon the eve of his marriage.

Drummond, of Hawthornden, a poet known chiefly by his sonnets, thought so meanly of Spenser's as to doubt whether they were really his productions. "They are so childish," he said, "that it were not well to give them so honourable a father." Drummond's early love was doomed to disappointment; but, like Spenser, he married in mature life, being fascinated with his second mistress from the resemblance she bore to the first. Immeasurably inferior as he is to the great poet of the *Faerie Queene* in all other respects, his superiority as a sonnet-writer is beyond question. His versification is singularly mellifluous, his thoughts are rarely injured by conceits, and many of the poems possess a symmetry and finish, which make us forget while reading them that Drummond is divided from us by the wide gap of three centuries. Take but one specimen out of many of equal worth that might readily be selected :

Look how the flower which lingeringly doth fade,
The morning's darling late the summer's queen,
Spoiled of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low the head :
Right so my life, contentments being dead,
Or in their contraries but only seen,
With swifter speed declines than erst it spread,
And, blasted, scarce now shows what it hath been.

As doth the pilgrim therefore, whom the night
 Hastes darkly to imprison on his way,
 Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright
 Of what yet rests thee of life's wasting day ;
 Thy sun posts westward, passèd is thy morn,
 And twice it is not given thee to be born.

One of the pleasantest among the many pleasant excursions that can be made from Edinburgh is a ramble through Hawthornden, and the biography of our Elizabethan poets contains few facts of more interest than the visit paid by Ben Jonson to the Scotch poet in his lovely retreat, then, of course, far more retired from the haunts of men than it is now. The long journey from London was made on foot, and to this visit we are incidentally indebted for nearly all our knowledge of "Rare Ben." Drummond kept the dramatist under his roof for some weeks, and, Boswell-like, jotted down his conversations.* Drummond's sonnets were published in 1616, Shakspeare's in 1609, and it will be seen, therefore, that in this hasty glance at a few of the Elizabethan poets, we have not kept strictly to chronological order. It is, however, better, perhaps, to dismiss the smaller sonnet-writers before referring to Shakspeare's wonderful productions in this department of poetry. They open a wide and difficult discussion upon which we do not propose to enter. It has bewildered some of our greatest writers, it has called forth some of the most grotesque opinions ever uttered on a matter of literary criticism ; it has exercised the infinite ingenuity of commentators without any satisfactory result, and it has led, as we think, to inferences as to the poet's personal character, which will not readily be admitted by those who know how often the love-sonnets of that age expressed an artificial passion, and not the real feelings of the writer.† One recent writer regards them as a burlesque upon "mistress sonnetting," and another, an American, propounds a still stranger theory. These sonnets, he asserts, are hermetic writings, and the passion uttered in them is expressed for the Divine Being. "Beauty's Rose," mentioned in the first sonnet is the spirit of humanity, and the "master-mistress" of the poet's passion addressed in the twentieth, means simply the writer's inward nature, as influenced by the reason and the affections which are alluded to elsewhere under the figure of his mistress's eyes. The word love, we are told, as used in the sonnets must, in the main, be understood as religious love ; and in fact the poems are mystical throughout, having one meaning

* One differs most unwillingly from a critic so distinguished as M. Taine, but when he calls Drummond "a vigorous and malicious pedant who has marred Ben Jonson's ideas and vilified his character," we are bound to say that in our opinion this harsh judgment cannot be sustained by an impartial estimate of the *Notes*. It should be remembered, too, that Drummond had no hand in the publication.

† The difficulty that besets the modern reader is to ascertain how much in them is conventional, how much due to genuine emotion. "Would it not be rash," asks George Eliot, "to conclude that there was no passion behind those sonnets to Delia which strike us as the thin music of a mandolin ? "

for the eye and another for the heart. The climax of folly is perhaps reached in the following passage. "In the hundred and fifty-third sonnet, *Cupid* signifies love in a religious sense; the *Mail of Dian* is a *virgin* truth of nature; the *cold valley-fountain* is the letter of the law, called a cold well in the hundred and fifty-fourth sonnet: and truth, we all know, is said to be at the bottom of a well." Our readers, we suspect, will prefer taking a less exalted view of these extraordinary productions. No doubt in many of his sonnets, Shakspeare "unlocked his heart," and it is this which makes them so interesting to us, but there are many of them that seem to be of an opposite character, and in which he expresses himself more like a dramatist than like a lyrical poet. If this be not the case, and if each one of the sonnets express the personal feeling of the writer, our high estimate of Shakspeare's character must be inevitably lowered by the perusal. An impression of this kind was left upon the mind of Mr. Hallam, who expressed his wish that Shakspeare had never written them. "There is," he says, "a weakness and folly in all excessive and misplaced affection, which is not redeemed by the touches of nobler sentiments that abound in this long series of sonnets;" and he adds, "so many frigid conceits are scattered around, that we might almost fancy the poet to have written without genuine emotion, did not such a host of other passages attest the contrary." Happily these "other passages" abound; if they did not we might be almost tempted to take as low an estimate of these "sugared sonnets" as Stevens himself; but may not the difficulty which besets the student of Shakspeare be considerably lessened, his faith in the noble spirit of the great master sustained, by the belief, a quite reasonable belief under the circumstances, that the larger portion of what is repellent in these poems, is due to the custom of the age rather than to the feeling of the writer? Be this as it may, and the question will always be an obscure one, the richness of thought, the enchanting felicity of language which distinguish the best sonnets of the series, make them worthy of the writer, and deserving, therefore, of repeated perusals. Hallam thinks they do not please at first, and Archbishop Trench has said finely: "Shakspeare's sonnets are so heavily laden with meaning, so double-shotted, if one may so speak, with thought, so penetrated and pervaded with a repressed passion, that packed as all this is into narrowest limits, it sometimes imparts no little obscurity to them." It follows that the careless reader will gain little pleasure from them, and that their fulness of beauty cannot be appreciated until they have been read and re-read, or better still, committed to memory. We do not intend to select even one sonnet for quotation out of the hundred and fifty-four which Shakspeare has left us. The choicest of them are, or ought to be, familiar; but if any young reader is still unacquainted with this golden treasury of thought and imagination, we counsel him to obtain a pocket edition of the poems, and carry it about with him until he gain a familiarity with its contents. At the same time, out of many of almost equal

worth we may recommend for his special study the sonnets commencing with the following lines :

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes.
 When to the sessions of sweet silent thought.
 No longer mourn for me when I am dead.
 From you have I been absent in the Spring.
 Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments.
 If thou survive thy well-contented day.
 Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore.
 Farewell ! thou art too dear for my possessing.
 Oh how much more doth beauty beauteous seem.

Shakspeare's sonnets consist invariably of three quatrains and a couplet, and one cannot but regret that he should have given the sanction of his great name to the least artistic form in which the sonnet can be written. It seems strange too that the familiarity with Italian literature, which is a feature of that age, should not have led our Elizabethan poets to follow the Italian model. Spenser tried some unfelicitous experiments with the sonnet, but he sedulously avoided the Italian form ; so did Sir W. Raleigh ; so did Daniel ; but the greater number of Drummond's sonnets are of the legitimate kind, and so also are those of Donne, a poet whose memory has been affectionately preserved by Izaak Walton, and whose poetry, now well-nigh dead, might have had a chance of longer life had it been less quaint and fantastical.

The student of the sonnet may pass at once, without missing anything in the transit, from Shakspeare to Milton, that is to say, from the year 1609 to the year 1631, when the Puritan poet produced his first sonnet, or rather to 1645, when he collected his early poems for the press. Milton's English sonnets (he wrote several in Italian which have been warmly praised by Italian critics) are eighteen in number, and were written at different periods of his life. It is remarkable that not one of them is a love-sonnet, and it is remarkable also that in every instance Milton has maintained the legitimate form, and that only on one occasion, namely, in the *Address to Cromwell*, has he concluded the sonnet with a couplet :—

Help us to save free conscience from the paw'
 Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

Milton had an exquisite ear, and proved himself in the *Paradise Lost* the most accomplished master of harmony this country has produced. Strange to say, however, his sonnets, while conspicuous for majesty of thought, are lacking in the delicate felicity of language which we might have looked for in such a poet. They are rough blocks, unpolished, rather than finished specimens of careful workmanship. Some of them are of profound interest as uttering in severely simple language the feelings of his heart, some of them are manly expressions of his political faith,

not one perhaps but has a distinct value in the history of his life. So far from being unworthy of his mighty genius, as Johnson thought when he told Hannah More that Milton "could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones," these short poems are gems of almost priceless value, as all must own, to whom the sonnet written *When the assault was intended to the city*, that *On the late Massacre in Piedmont*, that *On his blindness*, that *To Mr. Lawrence*, the two addressed *To Cyriac Skinner*, and that most beautiful sonnet "*On his deceased wife*,"—are familiar as household words. "Soul-animating strains," says Wordsworth, and in these words describes their character with the utmost precision.

In this brief survey of a large subject it will be advisable, taking the leap of a century, to pass from Milton to Gray, for we are not aware of any sonnet worthy of mention having been produced between 1645 and 1742, when the death of Richard West called forth from his poet-friend a sonnet of rare beauty. That century, nevertheless, was not barren in poetical fruit. However greatly we may prefer the wealth of thought and imagination which comes to us from the Elizabethan poets, from Milton, and from the poets who made so illustrious the early part of this century, we must not forget the debt we owe to some of the Queen Anne men, and especially to Pope, who, despite all his faults (and they are many), was a consummate literary artist, a wit of the finest order, a poet possessing an exquisite fancy and a felicity of expression which stamp all he has written with the mark of genius. Pope's taste and culture never led him to try his hand at the sonnet, and we think we are correct in saying that neither Addison nor Gay, Prior nor Parnell, Swift nor Thomson ever attempted this form of poetical composition. With the exception of Thomson, these writers were poets of the town and of society; but our English sonnet has been generally the growth of quiet thought and of an imagination fostered under the eye of nature. But to return to Gray. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge have found fault with the one sonnet he wrote on the ground that the diction is artificial, and the images incongruous. Gray was a purist in language. His fastidiousness indeed was sometimes carried to an extreme, but Gray never threw off entirely the conventional phraseology which was at one time regarded as the language of poetry. His odes, for example, abound with terms which a third-rate poet of our day would reject as turgid or artificial; for Gray, although a great poet, was not great enough to throw aside the fetters he knew how to wear so gracefully. Mr. Leigh Hunt, whose taste in all delicate questions of poetical controversy can rarely be doubted, has defended Gray's single sonnet with considerable ability; but let us first read the poem and then listen to his comments:—

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire :
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire :

These ears, alas ! for other notes repine,
 A different object do these eyes require :
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men :
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear :
 To warm their little loves the birds complain :
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear.
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

The feeling of this sonnet, as a whole, strikes us as exquisite ; but the allusion to Phœbus in the second line may grate on modern ears. Hear then what Mr. Leigh Hunt has to say in its favour. He defends it on the same ground that he would defend the *Lycidas* of Milton, and avers that men so imbued with the classics can speak from their hearts in such language. "Perhaps," he says, "had they not both so written they had not spoken so well. They would not have used language so accordant with the habits of their intercourse." And he adds, "The image in Gray's sonnet is beautiful for its own sake, and beautifully put :—

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And redd'ning Phœbus lifts his golden fire.

"We are too much in the habit of losing a living notion of the sun ; and a little Paganism, like this, helps, or ought to help, to remind us of it. . . . 'Phœbus,' in this instance, is not a word out of the dictionaries, but a living celestial presence."

Thomas Warton, a man of considerable culture, a wit, a college don, and favourably known as an imitative poet, who had studied chiefly in the school of Milton, was Gray's friend and contemporary, and a friend also of poor Collins, whose work, accomplished in a short and unhappy life, is very exquisite and precious. Warton is best known by his prose works, but some of his short descriptive poems are of marked excellence, and he wrote nine sonnets, of which two, although not to be ranked with the best, deserve at least honourable mention. We allude to the sonnet "Written in a Blank Leaf of *Dugdale's Monasticon*," and to that addressed to the river Loddon, which is gracefully and tenderly written.

Contemporary with Warton was a poet of a far higher order, whose work is, much of it, destined to live, because based upon the eternal truths of Nature. William Cowper may be said to have commenced the poetical revolution, which more thoroughly, and on a far wider scale, was accomplished by Wordsworth. Verse is not the fitting vehicle for theology ; and Cowper, as a theologian, frequently loses his cunning, but in his expression of religious feeling apart from dogma, and in his loving, careful description of Nature and of the feelings called forth by natural objects, he takes a distinguished place among the poets. Truly does Southey say of *The Task*, that "the descriptive parts everywhere bore evidence of a thoughtful mind and a gentle spirit, as well as of an

observant eye, and the moral sentiment which pervaded them gave a charm in which descriptive poetry is often found wanting." Cowper, one of the most sorrowful of men, is also one of the most pathetic of poets, and this pathetic charm will be felt in the exquisite sonnet addressed to Mrs. Unwin :—

Mary ! I want a lyre with other strings,
 Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,
 That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
 I may record thy worth with honour due,
 In verse as musical as thou art true,
 And that immortalizes whom it sings :—
 But thou hast little need. There is a Book
 By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
 A chronicle of actions just and bright—
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary shine ;
 And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

At the end of the last century two women, Charlotte Smith and Anna Seward, wrote a great number of sonnets which gained a temporary popularity. Charlotte Smith's are simple and unaffected. Miss Seward, who attained much local reputation, will be remembered from her friendship, if, indeed, friendship is the correct term to use, with Sir Walter Scott. The great novelist visited her at Lichfield, corresponded with her, and liked her far better than her writings. Unhappily the lady's estimate of her poetry differed from Scott's, and when she died, in 1809, she bequeathed her posthumous verses to him, with injunctions to publish them speedily, and to give a sketch of her life. Scott felt bound by the lady's wishes and produced three volumes of what he is forced in his correspondence to call " execrable poetry." It frequently happened that Scott's kindness of heart got the better of his critical judgment, and, in this case, he was severely punished for his good nature.

" He had been," says Lockhart, " as was natural, pleased and flattered by the attentions of the Lichfield poetess in the days of his early aspirations after literary distinction ; but her verses, which he had with his usual readiness praised to herself beyond their worth, appeared, when collected, a formidable monument of mediocrity."

From a mass of rubbish, however, one sonnet of sound quality may be rescued, upon *Rising Early to Read on a Winter's Morning*. It is good, but not highly good, and deserves notice rather for the feeling expressed in it, the genuineness of which many early risers will acknowledge, than for the instrumentation :

I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
 (Winter's pale dawn) ; and as warm fires illume,
 And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
 Through misty windows bend my musing sight,

Where round the dusky lawn, the mansions white
 With shutters closed, peer faintly through the gloom
 That slow recedes ; while yon gray spires assume,
 Rising from their dark pile, an added height,
 By indistinctness given—Then to decree
 The grateful thoughts to God, ere they unfold
 To friendship or the Muse, or seek with glee
 Wisdom's rich page. O hours more worth than gold,
 By whose blest use we lengthen life, and free
 From dear decays of age, outlive the old !

There are some sonnets that possess a literary rather than a poetical interest. Thus, for example, Miss Williams's sonnet *To Hope* scarcely advances beyond the rank of respectable mediocrity, but it is noteworthy as having been liked by Wordsworth and retained for many years in his memory. The sonnets of Bowles, too, many of them excellent specimens of mellifluous versification, are chiefly to be remembered as having awakened the poetic life in Coleridge, whose poetry, small in compass, ranks with the most purely poetical that has been produced this century. As a sonnet-writer, Coleridge (differing herein from his son Hartley) may be said comparatively to have failed, although that addressed to Schiller, and *Fancy in Nubibus*, will be known to most readers. The amazing genius of "the Highgate sage" was obscured and partly rendered inoperative by his fatal irresolution. "I will begin to-morrow," he says, "and thus he has been all his life long letting to-day slip."* The same curse beset the gifted Hartley, who has left little to testify to his uncommon powers. Probably his best and most characteristic poems are sonnets, and one of them, descriptive of his wasted life, is deeply pathetic. S. T. Coleridge, by the way, declared that the foreigner Blanco White had written the "finest and most grandly-conceived sonnet in our language," adding, "at least, it is only in Milton and in Wordsworth that I remember any rival." The execution, unfortunately, is not equal to the conception; but, notwithstanding some trivial defects, it is a noble poem, and justifies, or nearly so, this high eulogy :

TO NIGHT.

Mysterious Night ! when our first parent knew
 Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
 This glorious canopy of light and blue ?
 Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
 And lo ! creation widened in man's view.
 Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, O Sun ! or who could find,
 Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind ?
 Why do we then shun death with anxious strife ?
 If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life ?

* Southey.

The names of Blanco White and of Coleridge remind us that our rapid course has brought us within sight of the affluent and wide-spreading river of poetry that flowed at the beginning of this century. The little rivulet of the sonnet which we have lately followed swells again, as in the sixteenth century, into a broad stream; and standing upon its banks, and seeing the wealth it bears, one feels how impossible it is to do more than note a few of the choice treasures that attract the eye. The two most popular poets of sixty years since, Byron and Scott, have no claim upon our regard as sonnet-writers, nor should we look for much workmanship of this kind from a singer like Shelley, whose passionate emotion, uttered in many a winding bout of linked sweetness, could scarcely find free utterance on an instrument which demands reticence of language and stern compression of thought. One grand sonnet, however, has been produced by Shelley, which fills the imagination as only the work of a great master can :

I met a traveller from an antique land,
 Who said : " Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed ;
 And on the pedestal these words appear :—
 ' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
 Look on my works, ye mighty ! and despair ! '
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away ! "

Young as Keats was when he "awakened from the dream of life," he gave evidence in his last years of a maturity of thought, and a power of execution which prove that had he lived he would have taken rank with the worthiest. As it is, the small volume that contains all he wrote, is of priceless value, and will ever be read and loved by the student of poetry. He will find in it the immaturity of the youth as evinced in the lovely poem of *Endymion*, and the strength of perfect manhood as displayed in *Hyperion*, the *Ode to a Nightingale*, or the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and will marvel that this ripe and golden fruit of poetry was produced by one whose little life was comprised within twenty-six years. The luxuriant freedom of the earlier poems does not augur success to this poet as a sonneteer, and the opinion that might reasonably have been formed from them is not wholly fallacious. Keats wrote about forty sonnets, some of them loose in construction, some not in anywise remarkable, but in the collection will be found one at least that may claim a place with the best. We allude to the sonnet composed *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
 Round many western islands have I been,
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne :
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies,
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;
 Or, like stout Cortes, when with eagle eyes,
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent upon a peak in Darien.

But the greatest of all English sonnet-writers is Wordsworth. Not only has he composed a larger number of sonnets than any other of our poets, he has also written more that are of first-rate excellence. There is no intensity of passion in Wordsworth's sonnets ; and herein he differs from Shakspeare and from Mrs. Browning ; neither has he attained the severe dignity of style which marks the sonnets of Milton ; but for perfect purity of language, for variety and strength of thought, for the *curiosa felicitas* of poetical diction, for the exquisite skill with which the emotions of the mind are associated with the aspects of nature, we know of no sonnet-writer who can take precedence of Wordsworth. In his larger poems his language is sometimes slovenly, and occasionally, as Scott said, he chooses to crawl on all-fours ; but this is rarely the case in the sonnets, and though he wrote upwards of four hundred, there are few, save those on the *Punishment of Death*, and some of those called *Ecclesiastical* (for neither argument nor dogma find a fitting place in verse) that we could willingly part with.

To write of them here as they deserve is obviously impossible, and happily the task has been so ably done already by Sir Henry Taylor—himself a great poet, whose dramas will, we think, be even more appreciated in future years than they are now—that a few brief remarks may suffice. Wordsworth's belief that the very language of the common people may be used as the language of poetry, was totally inoperative when he composed a sonnet. He wrote at such times in the best diction he could command, and the language, like the thought, is that of a great master. His theory, indeed, was altogether set at nought in his finest poems, and there is no trace of it in the *Ode on Immortality*, *Tintern Abbey*, *Laodamia*, *The Eclipse of the Sun*, or in many other of the glorious poems to which he owes his fame. Much of that fame is, no doubt, due to the sonnets, which embrace almost every theme, except the one to which this branch of the poetical art has been usually dedicated. The passion of love has no place in the sonnets of Wordsworth, but some of the noblest are dedicated to liberty, some describe with incomparable felicity the personal feelings of the writer, some express, with a more perfect instrumen-

tation than any other poet has attained, the connection between the external world and the human soul ; some might be termed simply descriptive, were it not that even these are raised above the rank of descriptive poetry, by the pure and lofty imagination of the poet. The light that never was on sea or land pervades the humblest of these pieces, and throughout them there is inculcated a cheerful, because divine, philosophy. When he writes mournfully, it is from no fanciful melancholy such as that in which Byron-imitators used at one time to indulge, but because he fears lest the eager toil after wealth should deprive us of the simple pleasures, the serene happiness, which belong to us by birthright :—

The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ;
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !

And in another sonnet he gives expression to a like feeling. After saying that our life is only dressed for show, he adds :—

.... We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in Nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

And in another sonnet he adjures his countrymen, who at that time were anticipating a French invasion, not to place too much reliance on the "barrier flood" which separated them from France :—

.... Winds blow and waters roll
Strength to the brave, and Power and Deity ;
Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree
Spake laws to them and said that, by the soul
Only, the nations shall be great and free.

But if for a moment Wordsworth fears for England and feels for her "as a lover or a child," he acknowledges that such fears are "unfilial," since it is not to be thought of that the most famous stream of British freedom should be lost in bogs and sands :—

In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old ;
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspere spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

Indeed courage and cheerfulness are noticeable virtues in Wordsworth's poetry. His prevailing mood is one of steadfastness and hope—

A cheerful life is what the Muses love—
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

If we were asked by a young reader, hitherto ignorant of this great poet, to select from the sonnets, almost all of which deserve careful and patient study, a few of pre-eminent beauty, or that are specially characteristic of the poet, we could but point him to those with which the admirers of Wordsworth are already perfectly familiar—the two sonnets on the "Sonnet," the four on "Personal Talk," "London from Westminster Bridge," the three to "Sleep," that on the "Departure of Sir Walter Scott for Naples," and several of those dedicated to "Liberty." We may add that the series on the "River Duddon" are worthy of special study, and that those who desire to appreciate Wordsworth's power, and to enjoy the intellectual wealth that is stored up in his poetry, must be willing to give time and labour to the study of his works. Writing of the poet when he was still living and singing, Sir Henry Taylor observed, and the words come with equal force still, "Mr. Wordsworth never intended so to write that those who ran might read. To detain for a brief moment these run-away readers is the proper aim of those who are snatching at a transient popularity, and this writing for a cursory perusal has been the bane of literature in our times, and the ruin of art. But neither to this aim nor to this way of writing has Mr. Wordsworth ever ent himself."

Wordsworth is sometimes obscure from the weight and variety of his thoughts, but never from the lack of careful handling and artistic skill. He had always perfect command of his instrument; Mrs. Browning, on the contrary, exhibits more wealth of imagination and originality of thought, than skill in execution. She was a great poet, but not a consummate artist, and in the mechanical part of her art she is often faulty. In the sonnet, however, the necessity of a rigorous method was forced upon her, and some of her most remarkable poems are produced in this form. They may be divided perhaps, but not with any sharp line of demarcation, into two classes:—religious sonnets and love-sonnets. Among the former the highest place may be assigned to the three sonnets on *St. Peter* and to the four sonnets headed *Bereavement, Consolation, Comfort, and Cheerfulness taught by Reason*. The love-sonnets, forty-three in number, and professing to be "from the Portuguese," abound in wealth of thought, in glow of passion, in felicity of expression, in the high imagination which is the poet's prime possession. These are no "fancy pieces," but express in noble language the innermost soul of the writer. Limited as our space is, we must find room for one sonnet out of the series, and we insert it all the more willingly because we believe that this great poem "from the Portuguese"—which, although divided into many portions, is but one in design and action—is less known, and therefore less admired, than *Aurora Leigh* or *Casa Guidi Windows* :—

If thou must love me, let it be for nonght,
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day."
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee—and love so wrought
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
Since one might well forget to weep who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby.
But love me for love's sake, that evermore,
Thou mayst love on through love's eternity.

Here we must close this brief and very imperfect account of our sonnet-writers. To include living names would demand another Paper of equal length to this, for the sonnet is a favourite form of composition with recent poets, several of whom have employed it with a felicity that has rarely, if ever, been surpassed. Enough, however, has been said to show that for three centuries the sonnet has held a place among the legitimate forms of English verse, and with what affection it has been regarded by the great poets of England. The sonnet will not be appreciated by the "idle reader," who cares only for the amusement afforded by an "idle lay." All noble verse indeed demands studious regard; but "the sonnet is a form of poetry in which style is put under high pressure," and the delight it affords is generally the reward of toil.

Freia-Holda, the Teutonic Goddess of Love.

FAMILIARITY with the classical gods of Greece and Rome is considered a matter-of-course accomplishment in polite education. To show ignorance on that point, would render a person liable to be placed in the Kimmerian circle of outer barbarians. But how few are there who have even so much as a faint notion of the Germanic Pantheon, in which the creed of that race was once embodied, from which Englishmen have in the main sprung! "Day after day, as the weeks run round," says the author of *Words and Places*, the Rev. Isaac Taylor—"we have obtruded upon our notice the names of the deities who were worshipped by our pagan forefathers. This heathenism is indeed so deeply ingrained into our speech that we are accustomed daily to pronounce the names of Tiu, Woden, Thunor, Frea, and Saetere. These names are so familiar to us that we are apt to forget how little is really known of the mythology of those heathen times."

Sun- and star-worship was, according to Roman testimony, among the earliest forms of creed of the Germanic tribes. The *dies Solis*, and the *dies Luna*, had therefore no difficulty in being translated into a Sun-day and Moon- or Mon-day. In Tuesday we have the name of the Germanic god of war, Tyr, Tiu, or Ziu—in some Teutonic dialects also called *Eru* or *Erich*, the root of which word is no doubt the same as in the Hellenic Ares. Hence Tuesday, in High German *Dinstag*, is in some Alemannic and Bavarian districts called *Zistig*, *Erschtag*, or *Erichstag*. Wodan, the All-father, furnishes the name for Wednesday. Thursday is derived from the God of Thunder. Friday represents the day of the Germanic Venus. In Saturday, the derivation of which was formerly traced to *Saturnus*, a god Saetere is probably hidden—that name being, to all appearance, an alias for Loki, or Lokko, the evil-doing god, of whose malicious mind the *Edda* gives so graphic an account in the song called "The Banquet of Oegir" (*Oegisdrekka eða Lokasenna*)—a Titanic satire upon the dwellers in Asgard.

If we look over the topography of all countries in which the Germanic race dwells, or through which it has passed in the course of its migrations, what deep imprints do we find of its ancient creed in the very appellations of dwelling-places! The God of War; the All-father who rules the winds and the clouds; the God of Thunder; the Goddess of Love; the deity who represents insidious mischief and destruction—they are all to be met with, not only in Germany, Scandinavia, and other Continental lands, but on English soil, too, where Tewesley, Tewin, and Dowerstone; Wanborough, Wednesbury, Woodnesborough, Wansdike, and Woden Hill;

Thundersfield, Thurscross, and Thurso; Frathorpe, Fraisthorpe, and Freasley; Satterleigh, and Satterthwaite, in all probability bear witness to a decayed *cultus*. Even so Balderby and Balderton; Easterford, Easter-leake, and Eastermear; Hellifield, Hellathyrne, and Helagh, are no doubt referable to the worship of Balder, the god of light and peace; of Eostre, or Ostara, the goddess of Spring; of Hel, the mistress of the underworld. And again, when in this country we meet with places called Asgardby and Aysgarth, we have no difficulty in referring them to Asgard, the Germanic Olympus.

Still, with all these traces of a pagan religion—which had its grandeur and even some traits of charm—strewn thickly around us, how many are there who think it worth while to read the thoughts of their own ancestors in the mythic system so amply elaborated by them? Among a large class of people of highly cultivated mind, where are the readers of the powerful text-book of heathen Germanic religion? where the students of that folklore in which precious fragments of ancient creed are embedded, even as glittering shells, of brilliant hue, are concealed beneath the incrusted slime of the sea?

Yet, on the mere plea of poetical enjoyment, an extended knowledge of these subjects might be urged. Assuredly—as Mannhardt puts it, who with Simrock, Kuhn, Schwarz, and others, has ably and laboriously continued the immortal labours of Grimm, and of the many Norse scholars—there is not, in the Germanic world of Gods, the perfect harmony and plastic repose of the Olympian ideals of Greece. But their forms and figures tower in lofty greatness through the immensity of space; and if they are not so well rounded off as the deities of the later Greek epoch—if they are somewhat apt to float, before the mind's eye, like fantastically-shaped storm-clouds, or like bright-coloured visions of dawn and sunset, they are, on the other hand, less liable to be taken for mere idols of ivory, brass, and stone.

Can it be said, however, that there is a lack of poetical conception in the figure of Wodan, or Odin, the hoary god of the clouds, who, clad in a flowing mantle, careers through the sky on a milk-white horse, from whose nostrils fire issues? Is there a want of artistic delineation in Freia, who changes darkness into light wherever she appears—the goddess with the streaming golden locks, and the siren voice, who hovers in her snow-white robe between heaven and earth, making flowers sprout along her path, and planting irresistible longings in the hearts of men? Do we not see in bold and well-marked outlines the figure of the red-bearded, steel-handed Thor, who rolls along the sky in his goat-drawn car, and who smites the mountain giants with his magic hammer? Are these dwellers in the Germanic Olympus mere spectres, without distinct contour? And if their strength often verges upon wildness; if their charms are sometimes allied to cruel sorcery—are they not, even in their uncouth passions, the representatives of a primitive race, in which the pulse throbs with youthful freshness?

Again, what a throng of minor deities—surpassing in poetic conception even Hellenic fancy—have been evolved by the Teutonic mind out of all the forces of nature! Look at the crowd of fairies, and wood-women, and elfin, and nixes, and dwarfs, and cobolds, that dance in the moonlight, and whisk through the rustling leaves, or dwell enchanted in trees, or hide in glittering mountain-caves, or waft entralling songs from beneath the water, or bustle day and night through the dwellings of man! The Greeks had all, or nearly all, this—for the elements of mythology are the same in all Aryan lands: but there is a greater depth in the corresponding Teutonic tales: they coil themselves round the heart like invisible threads; they seem so familiar and homely, and yet lead the imagination into a strange dreamland.

Then, what a dramatic development Germanic mythology has! The Hellenic gods sit in ambrosian quiet in their lofty abodes; they are eternal gods, inaccessible to the corroding power of Time. True, there are some faint indications of a final change when Jupiter himself is to make place for a juster ruler. But, in the main, the deities of classic antiquity live on in an unbroken, immortal life; they are, as it has been aptly said, like so many statues ranged along a stately edifice, each statue perfect in itself—no idea of action, of tragic complication, arising out of the whole.

How different is the Germanic view of the Universe! There, all is action, struggle: and the world of gods itself is from the very beginning destined to a catastrophe. So long as the Aesir last, they are regarded as the girders and pillars of the Universe. But at the end of time, the world is to be consumed in a mighty conflagration; the heavens and the earth stand in a lurid blaze; Asgard and Walhalla, the abodes of gods and heroes, are doomed to destruction; the Universe breaks down in a gigantic crash:—

The sun darkens;
Earth in Ocean sinks;
From Heaven fall
The bright stars.
Fire's breath assails
The all-nourishing Tree;
Towering flames play
Against Heaven itself.

That cataclysm shall be preceded by—

An axe-age, a sword-age;
Shields shall be cloven—
A wind-age, a wolf-age,
Ere the world sinks!

Only after this terrible convulsion shall have ended, will there be introduced a new and peaceful reign, with eternal bliss. Then the white god of peace, whose death Loki had encompassed, will triumphantly

return. In the *Völuspa*, the prophetess foresees the coming of that golden age—

She sees arise,
A second time,
Earth from Ocean,
Beauteously green . . .

Unsown shall
The fields bring forth,
All evil be amended;
Balder shall come,
Höder and Balder,
The heavenly gods!

A mythic system of such poetic sublimity is as much worth being studied as that of classic antiquity, or as the Hindoo Pantheon, where we meet with the germs of the pagan religion of all Aryans. I have proposed to myself, in this present essay, to treat especially of Freia, who, in Norse mythology, appears already divided into two distinct figures, namely: Frigg, the consort of Odin; and Freyja, the goddess of love: whilst among the Germans, properly speaking, Freia combines the characters of Juno and of Venus—the motherly and the erotic element.

It may be prefaced here that, in the Norse system, a duodecimal series of gods and goddesses is clearly discernible, to whom the figure of the fiendish Loki is to be added. Germany, so rich in tales which contain the ancient deities under a strange disguise, has in all probability had the same duodecimal system of polytheism. Laborious researches strongly tend to establish that hypothesis as a fact. I will not enter here more deeply into this point to show the scientific mode of procedure, but will only quote a passage from Max Müller's work, which bears upon it. "It might seem strange, indeed," he wrote, "that so great a scholar as Grimm should have spent so much of his precious time in collecting his *Mährchen*, if those *Mährchen* had only been intended for the amusement of children. When we see a Lyell or Owen pick up pretty shells and stones, we may be sure that, however much little girls may admire these pretty things, this was not the object which these wise collectors had in view. Like the blue, and green, and rosy sands which children play with in the Isle of Wight, those tales of the people, which Grimm was the first to discover and collect, are the *detritus* of many an ancient stratum of thought and language, buried deep in the past. They have a scientific interest."

Out of a mass of such popular tales and traditions, the fair form of the German Venus may be reconstructed with a great degree of certainty. There is good ground for believing that the deities whom we afterwards find in Asgard, gradually arose out of an elementary worship—that, like other pagan gods, they are simply the result of a successive anthropomorphic condensation of ideas connected with the worship of the forces of Nature, and with cosmogonic speculations. That historical elements entered into the formation of their divine images, I readily acknowledge. In fact, it seems to me most probable that there is a mixed origin of all mythic

figures. At any rate, the worship of the forces of Nature appears to be the prevailing element in their composition ; and thus the first glimpse we obtain of Freia, or Freia-Holda, shows her under the shape of a storm-goddess—that is, as the female counterpart of Wodan, the ruler of the cloudy region, who was originally conceived as the storm himself—as the *máhán ðlma*, or Great Breath, which pervades the universe.

Now, it speaks much for an early culture of the heart among the Germanic race, that the vague idea of a storm-goddess should have so swiftly become refined, as it actually did, into the form of Freia-Holda, whose very name indicates friendliness, love, and benevolent grace. The process of shaping and polishing the images of the other divinities of the cloudy sky was a longer one. For a considerable time they seem to have retained their floating and somewhat less circumscribed character. Even when they had assumed that form which, under a more developed reign of art, would have rendered them fit for sculptured representation, popular fancy exhibited a marked inclination towards dissolving them, ever and anon, into their aboriginal chaotic substance. Not so with Freia. Round her, also, the most variegated myths clustered. Moreover, the various attributes conferred upon her, were apt to give rise to a number of special figures, ranging—extraordinary to say—from the typification of charms to that of hideous witchcraft, from beauty to that of its very contrast. Nevertheless, there is, as with the Greek deities, a clear, unmarred, central picture, which shows Freia-Holda under an aspect of well-marked, noble beauty. The mind of the people who revered her, fondly dwelt upon the portraiture of her attractions and virtues, always adding new traits, and elaborating it with fresh touches. Hence the mythic circle which surrounds the worship of Freia, is in every respect one of the richest in German folk-lore.

Lapse of time and local tradition have certainly given us a multiform variety of Freia-Holda images. The Gods of Homer and Hesiod were not exactly those of Æschylus and Euripides. In the same way, the Germanic Pantheon was not at all times fitted with the identical forms. The tribal differences among the German race also went far to give a different colouring to the original character of a deity. But even as we have a well-defined idea of the character and attributes of Jupiter, of Juno, of Mars, of Venus, quite irrespective of the special myths, which vary considerably according to time and locality, so also do we possess an average image of Wodan, of Thunar, but most particularly of Freia.

Whilst other deities are heard in the tempest that bends the rustling tree-tops of primeval forests, or hurriedly pass along the vault of Heaven : the Goddess of Love gladdens more visibly the glance of men, as she glides slowly over flowery meadows, amidst a rosy sheen.

She is represented as being of entrancing beauty, with long-flowing, thick, golden hair of great heaviness. Her body is snow-white ; she is clad in a white garment, which spreads a rosy effulgence. On her forehead hangs a single tangled lock of hair. She is covered, over her

white robe, with a light veil, from head to foot. Round her neck she wears a chain of shining jewels, from which a light streams forth, as of the dawn of morn. Rose-bushes and willow-trees are her favourite resorts: willow-trees overhanging crystal lakes. Her voice, full of melodious song, entralls men. Its heavenly strains transport the listener to spheres of unknown bliss; he is drawn along, in rapture, in spite of his will. Where-ever she walks, flowers sprout up on her path, and the merry sound of golden bells is heard tinkling. A radiance of ethereal worlds follows her footsteps. In the depth of night, the wanderer who has lost his way, guides his walk after her beneficent apparition. The fields over which she passes, are blessed with fruit.

About Twelfth-night time—that is, at the winter solstice—when the German tribes were accustomed to celebrate one of their sun-worship rites, Freia-Holda visits the households, looking after the industry of the maidens at the spinning-wheel. She is the goddess of amorousness, but also of housewifely accomplishments. She has a virgin-like appearance; in her qualities, however, the two womanly elements are blended. Her residence is beyond the azure skies, in a sunny region behind the clouds; limpid waters divide her reign from the outer world. There she dwells in a garden, where fragrant flowers and luscious fruits grow, and the song of birds never ceases.

On the meadows, and amidst the foliage of that garden, the souls of the Unborn—whose protectress Freia is—are playing their innocent, unconscious games, gathering food from the chalices of flowers, until the heavenly messenger comes who calls them into human birth. In that garden, there is also the Fountain of Rejuvenescence—the *Jungbrunnen* or *Quickborn*, where the sources of life are incessantly renovated, and decrepit age once more changes into blooming youth.

Such, with a few strokes, is the image of the Goddess whose worship was most deeply rooted among our forefathers—so much so, that it was found impossible to overthrow her reign except by a substitution which preserved the substance of her attributes.

Indeed, the German Mariolatry of the middle ages is to a large degree traceable to these previous heathen customs. There are a number of highly coloured hymns to the Virgin, the imagery of which is almost literally taken from similar Freia songs, fragmentary pieces of which latter have come down to us in children's rhymes. Many of these hymns would be perfectly unintelligible if we did not know the poetical surroundings of the pagan goddess. Freia, the Queen of the Heavens, the sorrowing mother of Balder, that god of peace who met with his death through the traitor Loki, was transfused into the *Mater dolorosa*, the "Mother of God" of the Roman Church; but in this transfusion she retained much of her original character. However, in order to create a division-line, a notion was fostered that Freia's day, Friday—originally the favourite marriage-day—was an unlucky day; a superstition which prevails to this moment among large numbers of uneducated people. Nevertheless, there are some

nooks and corners where, even now, Friday is regarded as the proper wedding-day—clearly a remnant of the old religion.

It was “*das ewig Weibliche*,” the worship of which the Germanic race tenaciously clung to, though under strange forms of superstition. Out of this frame of mind grew up the chivalric view about womankind, which in Germany had its lyric representation in the poetry of the *minne-singer*. The fervour with which that view was held, often assumed the shape of an abstract principle, leading to the most ardent evolutions of thought and sentiment, quite irrespective of individual passion and amatory reality. It would be an error to suppose that aristocratic chivalry had created this whole world of woman-worship. It was a trait characteristic of the Germanic races as such—even at a time when they were only just emerging into historical light. The early Roman authors mention the veneration in which womankind was held by our forefathers. The ancient Germans ascribed to woman a kind of sacred and prophetic character.—(Tacitus, *Germ.*, cap. viii.) And, no doubt, the institution of monogamy, which was but occasionally broken through by the aristocratic chieftains; the influence exercised not only by the priestesses and prophetesses, such as Aurinia and Veleda, but by the German women in general: an influence of persuasion, of wise counsel, and of heroic, patriotic conduct, not an influence obtained by equality of political rights—all this points to the fact of an early development of more tender sentiments, of which the *Freia cultus* was the religious outcome.

The name of the goddess appears in different forms, as Freia, Friia, Frea, Frigga, Frikka, Frikk. It is traceable to a root meaning “to love.” In Gothic, *frijón* means “to love;” hence the German “*Freund*,” friend; hence, perhaps, also “*freien*,” to woo, and *Frau*. In Low German, the verb “*friggen*” is still extant, in the sense of “to love.” Thus Freia is a loving, befriending divinity; and through the fertilising character, naturally connected with these qualities, as well as through the sunny effulgence which envelops her attractive picture, she easily merges into the form of Ceres. There are indications, at least, that she may have been revered also as a goddess of agriculture, and that healing powers were attributed to her. Her sister was Volla (Fullness), of whom we get a glimpse in the famous incantation song of Merseburg*—a divinity evidently typifying the abundance of Nature.

I have endeavoured, out of a confusing wealth of legends, to draw the form of Freia in clear colours, choosing that type which the goddess must have assumed at a certain period in the early life of the German nation, when vague conceptions about the struggle of elementary forces had been fused into more plastic expression, whilst the process of decay and deterioration had not yet set in, which afterwards reduced the figure of Freia-Holda to that of a mere sorceress, nay, even hag. But how,

* It begins with the words:—

*Phol ende Uodan
Vuorun zi holza.*

it will be asked, was the goddess of love and domestic virtue wrought from the crude idea of a divinity of the clouds who flits along the horizon?

As the wife of the storm-god Wodan, she is, in the early form of the tale, chased by him, even as the cloud is by the wind. Minor cloud-goddesses, or cloud-women, environ her; in some myths they are conceived as horses or swans. They are the swift-running, fast-sailing clouds, of sombrer or of more silvery hue. The flight of the goddess from before her consort, and the representation of her companions as mares, remind us of the Hindoo myth, in which a similar female deity flies before the Ruler of the skies in the shape of a mare.

Soon the tale assumes a more poetic form. It is now no longer the Ruler of the skies who chases his stormy spouse; but, by an inversion not unfrequent in the process of mythological formation, it is henceforth she who wanders, wailing and in tears, over hill and dale in search of her long-lost lover. The lamenting wind and the rain, which were connected with the notion of a tempest-deity, are here converted into the plaints and the weeping of the longing goddess. The howling storm softens into loving grief, and the somewhat dark and dim deity which represented the first, necessarily undergoes a corresponding transfiguration.

The same is the case with her cloudy retinue. The white and silvery specks on the welkin come to the foreground; from swans, under which form they were at first conceived, they change into swan-virgins. Nor do they career or sail along the sky any more. They now act as the embellishing suite of the loving goddess, who, after having scarcely met with her eagerly-sought friend, loses him once more, and has, Isis-like, to start on a new heart-rending peregrination. It would appear that the ever-repeated change of the junction and the separation of the productive and receptive faculties in nature is here shadowed forth under the guise of loving satisfaction and grief. In this gradual alteration of imagery, the successive humanization of the character of the myth is clearly discernible.

Later on—I will here remark in passing—when the period of mythic decay arrives, the early form and character of the swan-virgins is entirely lost. Of the swan, nothing then remains but the foot, which is tacked on to the body of an elf, or even a gnome. The tales in which swan's feet occur, are very valuable for the attentive inquirer. The imprint of these birds' feet serves as a trace leading back to the sanctuary of the Teutonic Aphrodite, and thus helps to reconstruct our knowledge of the once widespread *cultus*.

To look upon the sky as a "sea of ether," as a "heavenly ocean"—*samudra* in Sanskrit—is an ancient Vedic notion. Freia, who resides beyond the azure sky, at the bottom of a crystal well, is, however, in more than one sense a water-goddess, for she belonged originally to that circle of Vana-deities who in Norse tradition are said to have been engaged in a long and fierce struggle with the Asa-gods, until peace was concluded between the rival and hostile dynasties of gods, when Freia, with

some others, was received into Asgard. Whether this tale refers to two different cosmogonic systems held by different races in pre-historic times, or whether it marks a religious struggle among separate Germanic tribes, it is impossible now to decide. But the original character of Freia-Holde as a water-goddess of the Vana-circle is still apparent in the fairy tale, current to this day among the German peasantry, about "Frau Holle," who is represented as walking up a hill with a golden, bottomless pail, a kind of Danaides tub, from which water incessantly flows.

In another tale, Frau Holle is said, when it snows, to have spread and shaken her white mantle. It is the white robe which the Germanic goddess once wore. Again, when white, shimmering cloudlets—called to this day "lambs" (*Lämmer*) in German—make their appearance, Holle is said to drive her flock. The former character of the protectress of agriculture appears in this form of the legend.

The sunny attributes of the original water-goddess linger in another legend, which says that when there has been rain during the whole week, it is expected to cease on Friday—Freia's day—when Frau Holle has to dry her veil, which she spreads for that purpose over rose-bushes and willows, the trees anciently sacred to that northern Venus. In the same way, the conception of Freia as a solar deity lingers in a Low German children's rhyme, which, though slightly deteriorated, describes with wonderful fidelity the heavenly abode of the goddess in all its typical particulars. In that rhyme, the water-carrying goddess, who walks up the hill with the golden bucket, is called "the little sun,"—

Wo dat sönneken den berg herop geit.

In German children's rhymes, tales, plays, and dances, the last shreds and fragments of the old heathen system of religion are wonderfully preserved. The rhymes constitute a sort of poetised mythology for the use of the nursery. They are the traditional oral catechism of a creed which is no longer understood. The Freia worship; the adoration of the Nornes, the weird Sisters of Fate; the belief in a coming downfall of Asgard;—all these pagan notions have left their vestiges in childish ditties. The quaint Cockchafer ditties, to which I have yet to allude, are among the most important in this respect. It is often difficult to sort out the mere dross which has crept in by the misapprehension of words, leading to new associations of ideas, in which the original meaning of the myth disappears. Yet these infantile songs, often apparently devoid of sense, are a rich mine, from which ancient forms of religious thought may be dug out.

One of these rhymes runs thus :

Mutter Gottes that Wasser tragen
Mit goldenen Kannen
Aus dem goldenen Brünnel.
Da liegen Viel' drinne.
Sie legt sie auf die Kissen,
Und thät sie schön wiegen
Auf der goldenen Stiegen.

The "golden buckets" of Freia are, in this ditty, already carried by the "Mother of God." The mother of Balder, of the transfix'd deity who has died, but who will hereafter introduce a millennium of peace, is, under Roman Catholic influence, changed into *Mutter Gottes*. But her heathen paraphernalia still cling to her. She still resides in the golden, or sunlit, well. She is still the water-goddess; and "the many that are lying" in her celestial abode, behind the azure waves of the ethereal ocean, are still the Unborn who dwell in Freia's fragrant domain.

If we follow that train of ideas, in which Freia was regarded as a representative of warmth, of light, of fire, we find it fabled that the souls of the Unborn, when awaiting their human embodiment, are carried earthwards in flashes of lightning. The soul, in other words, was considered a heavenly ray or flash. In connection with this idea is the sanctification of many things and beings who, on account of their colour being that of lightning,—namely, red,—are received into the special service of the Goddess of the Unborn. The red-billed and red-legged stork and the red-winged lady-bird must here specially be mentioned. They were once nearly worshipped. A halo of inviolability still protects in Germany the stork. The lady-bird also continues to be held, by children at least, in some sort of friendly reverence.

The lady-bird was supposed to aid in carrying, on its red wings, the souls of children to their terrestrial destination. The very name "lady-bird" points to the former goddess: the "Lady" originally was the Germanic Queen of the Heavens, for whom the Virgin Mary was afterwards substituted. In a Low-German dialect, the lady-bird is called *Mai-Katt* (May-cat), which name points to the time of the year that was sacred to Freia, and to the cat, a team of whom drew the car of the goddess.* Other names are: *Sonnenkalb*, *Sonnenkäfer*, *Sonnenhühnchen*, *Sonnenwend-Käfer*, bringing us back to Freia's sunny domain. The lady-bird is also called *Marien-Käfer*, from the Virgin Mary; or lastly, *Herrgotts-Käfer*, the Lord (*Herrgott*) being, in this case, substituted for the Lady, a transposition frequently observable in mythology, the male and female forms of the ruling spirit of the Universe ("Woden" and "Frau Gaude") often taking each other's place.

There is a Suabian song, in which the lady-bird (*Herrgotts-Moggela*) is called upon to fly into heaven, there to fetch, on a golden basin, a golden baby. In other tales, children are supposed to come from a "hollow tree"—*aus hohlem Baum*, or *aus dem Hollenbaum*. This strange notion of the origin of mankind from the vegetable reign, which appears in

* There is a children's rhyme in the Austrian dialect, representing the cat as going to Hollabrunn,—that is, the well of Holda—where she finds a baby "in the sun." The Freia-Holda worship, in its bearings upon a Neptunic and a solar *cultus*, is in this verse given in a few quaint words:—

Hop, hop, Heserlmann!
Unsa Katz hat Stieferln an,
Rennt damit nach Hollabrunn,
Findt a Kindla in da Sunn!

various German doggrels, is to be met with also among the ancient Greeks, as the saying shows : “ οὐ γάρ ἀπὸ δρυός ἴστι παλαιφάτον δνὸν ἀπὸ πέτρης.” In the “ hollow ” tree we have, however, unquestionably Holda’s, or Holle’s, tree, on whose branches the unborn sat.

We shall afterwards see how a similar deterioration of terms led to the idea of Holda as a witch who was charming in the face, but hollow in the back, similar to an excavated stem with gnarly bark. In Hessian trials of witches, long after the middle ages, we read of “ Fraw Holt ” under such a description ; the name of Holda, Holle, or Holt, having, by a double assimilation of sounds, given rise to the comparison of the sorceress with a hollow tree—*holt* or *holz* signifying wood or tree. The corruption of words is, indeed, one of the most frequent sources of new mythical formations.

Even as the lady-bird, so the stork also was in the service of Freia. His red colours, too, made him the representative of lightning, of electricity, of the principle of vivification. He helped in carrying the souls of the unborn earthwards. His mythic name, therefore, was “ Adebar ” or “ Odebar ”—carrier of children, bringer of souls. Even now, he has that name in various German dialects ; but its meaning is obliterated or obscured in the popular memory.

As the typification of the spark of heaven, the stork was connected with sun-worship. Hence, he was doubly sacred to our forefathers, and is still partly so to our village folk, who frequently place a wheel for him on house-tops and chimneys, that he may the more commodiously build his nest on them. In solar worship, the wheel particularly represents the orb of the sun. It is used as such in the solstice-fires (*Sonnenwend-Feuer*), which German peasants light to this day amidst great jubilation.

When the peasant boys of Upper Bavaria and the Tyrol roll their tarred wheels, which are set on fire, in the dark night down the mountains, making them describe most wonderful gyrations, they sing songs in honour of their loves. There are set rhymes to that effect, which have been handed down through generations, and in which, according to the occasion, the name of the particular sweetheart has only to be inserted. The solar and the Aphroditean *cultus* of Freia were blended in early mythology ; the traces of this connection are yet visible in such boorish merrymakings !

So late down as the sixteenth century, the Roman Church thought it advisable to take the heathen myth of Freia’s well, within which the unborn are playing, and of Adebar the bringer of children, under its own protection. So-called *Kindlein’s-Brunnen*, to which women proceeded, in order to drink the consecrated water, were erected, or changed into holy places of the Catholic Church, in many towns and villages of Germany. Bishop John, of Saalhausen, had a chapel built, in 1512, over one of these old places of Freia worship. Numbers of women congregated there, doing reverence to the “ holy and chaste virgin at the Fountain of Life ” (*Queckbrunnen*). The weather-vane of the chapel was a stork, who carried

a child in his bill—even as is still to be seen in the toys of German children, who are much given to the notion that a fresh arrival of a brother or sister is due to the obliging stork.

The cockchafer, too, seems to have been a hallowed insect of yore. It is called *Mai-Käfer* in German, from the period of the year when it generally comes first out of the ground; and that period, as said before, was the sacred time of the Goddess of Love. German children have a custom of placing that beetle on their left hand, to which they generally attach it by a thread, and then they sing a verse the meaning of which has long puzzled investigators. Mannhardt has collected quite a variety of such verses, all taken direct from the lips of German boys, in order to prove that they refer to that final catastrophe when the gods and their giant antagonists are warring with each other, and the Asa-world collapses in a fearful tumult and universal conflagration. All the rhymes collected until now make it extremely probable that they refer to the danger which envelops, and finally destroys, Holda's reign. Still, Mannhardt was not able to give any verse in which her name is distinctly traceable.

Now, in the same way, it had formerly been rendered very probable that all the Holda myths were Freia myths; Holda being simply one of the appellatives of the Goddess, which had branched out into a well-nigh identical form. For a while, the hypothesis of the original identity of the two forms seemed unsubstantiated. At last, however, in a Latin manuscript preserved at Madrid, the name of the deity was discovered in the form "Friga-Holda," when the substantial unity of the two mythic figures was placed beyond doubt.

Even so, I believe I can supply the missing link in regard to the curious Cockchafer Songs, which are of such high mythological interest. I distinctly remember a ditty sung by children, in which the cockchafer is bidden to fly to his father (presumably Wodan, the consort of Freia-Holda), who is said to be "at war," and to his mother who is "in Hollerland," where a conflagration has broken out, which consumes Hollerland:—

Maihüfer, flieg'!
Dein Vater ist im Krieg!
Deine Mutter ist in Hollerland—
Hollerland ist abgebrannt!
Iuchhe!

The latter joyful exclamation may be supposed to be the Christian "*Io triumphe*," the utterance of joy over the destruction of the heathen Asa-world. I need scarcely remind the reader that the song which is sung in Germany about the cockchafer, is also sung in some parts of this country about the lady-bird. ("Lady-bird, lady-bird, hie thy way home! Thy house is on fire! Thy children all roam!" Or: "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home! Your house is on fire! Your children will burn!") See, for instance, Jamieson's *Northern Antiquities*.)

In the folk-lore still current in Germany, the name of "Freia" is only

preserved yet among the people of the Ukermark and the Altmark. Otherwise, we meet with it in some Suabian, Franconian, Alemannic, and Lower Saxon designations of villages, and different places, where her worship once flourished. Thus there are several Frickenhausen, situated near lakes—quite in keeping with the myth which makes the Goddess haunt the water, even as Aphrodite rose from the waves of the sea. In other parts of Germany the goddess is called Holda; Frau Gode, Gauden, or Gae (that is, Woden's wife, the "W" being changed into "G"—even as war, in old-German *werra*, becomes, in French, *guerre*); or Frau Hera, or Harke; Mother Rose; Perchta, or Bertha. All these seemingly distinct fairy figures arose from the personification of Freia's attributes and appellatives.

There is a multifrom mass of legends, of a mixed heathen and Christian character, in which the image of Freia is recognisable under the oddest masks. As "Mother Rose" she has been received into the legendary circle of the Roman Church. But why, many will wonder, should the Virgin pass under the name of Mother Rose? I forego entering into the etymological explanation, which traces that name to a cognomen of Freia, and will only mention an old pagan sorcery song, clearly referable to that goddess, which says:—

*Kam eine Jungfer aus Engelland;
Eine Rose trug sie in ihrer Hand.*

This "Engelland" is not, as some misunderstand it, England, but the land of the white elfs, the fairyland of Freia. The "Jungfer," or Virgin, who reigns over it, became the Virgin Mary; and the favourite flower of the German goddess of love was converted into a symbol of the Madonna.

As Mother Rose, Freia appears in a Christianised garb. But under the names of Holda, Gode, Hera, and Perchta, she preserves, in the tales, her heathen character as a fay—in a good or an evil sense. Most astonishing are the transformations she undergoes under these various appellations. Even as the storm-god Wodan, who led the departed heroes into Walhalla, became changed, after the introduction of Christianity, into a wild huntsman who careers along the sky with his ghostly retinue, so Freia-Holda also becomes a wild huntress, who hurries round at night with the unfortunate souls. Through this same association with hobgoblin devilry, she is converted into a Mother Haule, or *Haule-mutter*, a howling utterer of mournful wails about the dead. By way of direct contrast, the once white-robed goddess with the snow-white body changes, as Hera, into a white dove, a typification of loving innocence. At a first glance, such *quid pro quo's* and metamorphoses into the very opposite would appear incredible; but he who has studied the effect of misapprehended words and sounds upon the untutored mind of man will not be astonished at these changeling substitutions.

The way in which the souls of the unborn were supposed to be called from Freia's garden, is to this day represented in various children's games

in Germany, by words and expressive mimicry. In the Perchta, or Bertha myths, that linger in some secluded valleys, the crowd of the unborn still appear as a suite of elves, called *Heimchen*, who follow the goddess. The Perchta legends are of a somewhat wild—occasionally Bacchantic and Korybantic—character, in which the gloomy element is, however, not wanting. The goddess, who once typified the purest beauty, assumes in them rather motley and multiform shapes: there are beautiful Perchtas as well as "wild Perchteln," the latter with a satyr-like appearance, running about with dishevelled hair. The Bacchantic and Korybantic character of the goddess appears even from a passage in Luther's writings. He calls her, not Perchta, but with her softer name, "Frau Hulda," makes a Dame Nature of her, who rebels against her God, and describes her as "donning her old rag-tag livery, the straw-harness, and singing and dancing whilst fiddling on the violin" (*hengt um sich iren alten trewdelmarkt, den stroharnss, hebt an und scharret daher mit irer geigen*). The straw-harness may be supposed to symbolize the former character of the Teutonic Cythere as a Ceres, a goddess of productiveness and fertility in every sense.

Representations of the Perchta myth have until lately been going on, at stated times of the year, among the peasantry of Southern Germany; and are, no doubt, still in vogue here and there. Near Salzburg, a "Perchtel" is represented, in such masquerades, with a sky-blue dress, wearing a crown of tinkling bells, and singing in highly jubilant manner. The goddess, or fairy, here shows something of a *vulgivaga* character; a trait cropping up already in the Eddie Hyndlu-Song.

The decay of the Freia myth may be said to have begun when her powers of entrancing men made her to be looked upon as a dangerous sorceress, as the incarnation of witchcraft. Still, before the goddess simply became a hag—an *ole Moder Tär sche*, that is, Old Mother Sorceress—popular fancy wove some charming legends about her magic qualities. On the banks of the river Main, there are *Hulli-steine*, Holda's stones, or hollow stones, on which a fairy form sits at night, bewailing the loss of her betrothed one who has left her. There she sits, sunk in sorrow, shedding tears over the rock until it is worn down and becomes hollowed out. In another Franconian tale, the bewitching fay sits on a rock in the moon-light, when the bloom of the vine fills the mountains and the valleys with sweet fragrance; she is clad in a white, shining garment, pouring forth heart-enthralling songs. The children, in those parts of the country, are warned not to listen to the seductive voice, but ardently to pray their *pater-noster*, lest they should have to remain with "Holli" in the wood until the Day of Judgment. From this legend, Heine took the subject of his Lorelei song, transplanting it from the Main to the Rhine. Holda appears, in this Franconian version, with faintly-indicated surroundings of a Bacchic nature; and her abode is described as "in the wood," whither many pagan deities were relegated after Christianity had obtained the upper-hand.

Some myths of later growth convert Freia into a "Venus" who has lost all the attributes of domestic virtue, connected with the earlier image of the goddess; nay, into a sort of grim Lakshmi, half Venus, half infernal deity, who sits in a mountain cave, where there is much groaning of souls suffering damnation. Other legends, though painting her as a she-devil, do not depict the "Venusinne"-grotto as a place of torment, but rather as one of magic attractiveness, from which even the repentant sinner, who has been allowed to leave it for a pilgrimage to Rome, cannot break loose for ever. This view of the abode of Venus we get in the famed Tannhäuser legend, about which we possess various ancient poems, dating from the fifteenth century.

The identity of the German Venus legends with the Freia-Holda cycle is proveable from various facts. There is a "Venus-Berg" in Swabia, situated close to a "Hollenhof." In a Swiss version of the Tannhäuser song, Frau Venus is called "Frau Frene," a name evoking the memory of Frea or Freia. The Hörseel-Berg, near Eisenach, an old place of Freia worship, was especially pointed out as containing the underground abode of Venus. And in the same way as Wodan's wife, when she left the mountain at midnight, as a wild huntress, with her army of souls, was preceded by a grey-bearded man, the trusty Eckhart, who with a white staff warned off all people not to obstruct the path of the goddess; so also Venus, when she leaves the mountain, is preceded by the trusty Eckhart. The identity is therefore fully established.

To complete the picture of strange transformations, I ought to speak of Freia-Bertha becoming the *Ahn-frau* and the *weisse Frau* of German princely families and royal castles. The presiding female deity of the Asa-dynasty is changed into the ancestress of kings who, with the pride of rulers by right divine, trace their pedigree to celestial origin. In the same way, the white-robed goddess, who once exercised a powerful influence, is metamorphosed into a spectral "woman in white," whose appearance foretells the coming of great events, or is even a harbinger of royal death.

I will not treat here of the curious chapter of Berthas, ancestresses of kings, who were represented as swan-footed, flat-footed, large-footed, or club-footed, a characteristic which brings us back to the bevy of swan-damsels who surrounded Freia. I will only, in conclusion, speak of the strange transfiguration of Holda into a Hel, of a goddess of Love into a goddess of Death, whose name afterwards furnished the designation for the infernal region, or hell.

And here it is first to be observed that Hel, the Germanic mistress of the under-world, originally was a mother of life, like Holda, as well as a mother of death. Her name, which comes from *helen* or *hehlen*—in Latin *celare*—indicates that she is a deity who works in darkness and secrecy. Hence, she represents, in the beginning, the forces of nature that are active beneath the hiding soil. Consequently, she is not, properly speaking, destructive; she rather aids in nature's rejuvenation. She typifies the idea of life emerging from death, and of death being only a

transformation of life. In the Edda, Hel is half dark or livid, half of the hue of the human skin (*blá hálf en hálf með hörundur lit*) ; similar to the Hindoo Bhavani or Maha Kali, the mother of nature and life, the goddess who creates and destroys, the representative of love and of death, whose face alternately is radiant with beauty, like that of Aphrodite, or expressive of hideous terrors. In her beneficent quality, Bhavani carries a lotos-flower in her hand, even as Freia the rose ; and the waters of the Ganges murmur her praise, as crystal lakes may have done that of the Germanic deity. In her destroying and avenging character, the Hindoo goddess is Kali the bloodthirsty, who rides a hellish horse. So Holda is converted into a fiendish Hel.

Thus the images of life and death, of creation and destruction, of beauty and of horrors, touch each other in a mysterious twilight. It is an idea which may be followed through many religious systems ; for is not Apollo also, the sunny god, a typification of the pernicious power as well as of ideal beauty ? and does not his very name bear the trace of the destructive force ascribed to him ? The deep meaning contained in these contradictory combinations attaches also to the mythological fancies of our ruder forefathers ; and though it may sometimes be difficult to grasp the sense that is enclosed in the veiling legends, they have, irrespective of the philosophical significance which they struggle to express, a poetical merit of their own, often exhibiting a bold and many-coloured imagery, and a power of fashioning forms, such as we are wont to admire in the products of classic antiquity.

KARL BLIND.

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A PAIR OF LOVERS ENGAGED IN THE MOST AFFECTIONATE CONVERSATION.

Pearl and Emerald.

CHAPTER I.

A TALE OF GOTHAM.



OME of the details of the following story may appear to many to be strange—perhaps, to a few, even verging upon the incredible; and of the incredible, people are not fond nowadays, except in the columns of their daily paper. I can only urge, in reply, that, not being fiction, it is necessarily strange. Those who wish to indulge their taste for that which this narrative is not, I refer at once to historians and journalists, whose trade it is to cater for them. For my own part, I make it a rule, and find the rule a safe one, to believe everything that is contrary to experience, and nothing that is in accordance with it. He was a wise

man who said, "*Credo quia incredibile*"—"I believe it just because it is incredible." As to the truth of those parts of this story which, being probable in themselves, trespass, therefore, upon the realms of fiction, I offer no opinion. They, being probable, are probably not true. But upon the truth of those parts which are manifestly incredible, I willingly stake fortune, reputation, all that I possess in this world of lies. It is true that my reputation is not particularly worth the having, while my fortune has yet to be made. But that is my own affair. Were I Rothschild himself, I would still say to all cavillers, "There lies my glove!" And, if they should reply that my glove is not the only thing about me that lies—why, that is their affair, not mine.

Perhaps this, too, will be called incredible?

Once upon a time, a certain philosopher of Gotham wishing, one sunshiny morning, to know what o'clock it was, took his lantern, lighted it, and paid a visit to the sun-dial that stood in the market-place of that ancient and famous town. Now, the fact of his taking a lantern for such

a purpose was not in itself remarkable, for his fellow-townsmen had been in the habit of doing so at night and in cloudy weather for generations—which was the reason why no two of them were ever known to agree about the time of day. But to use a lantern in full sunshine!—that was too much even for their philosophy. And so it was no matter for wonder that even the least wise in that city of wise men were impolite enough to call our philosopher a fool for his pains.

Gotham is, of course, no more. Its site has, of course, been swept away by that flood of modern progress which sweeps away all things, and reduces all mankind to one terrible dead level of perfect wisdom. But, even as when the Cornish had long become a dead language, there yet survived one old woman who spoke it still, so, when Gotham was no more, there were left at least three of its townsmen, who survived even to our own day. Their names were Peter Grode, Nathan Levi, and Arthur Cranstoun.

CHAPTER II.

FELICIA.

THERE stood, and still stands, a certain house in a broad and essentially respectable street leading out of Russell Square, in which all the houses were, and are, of so precisely the same comfortable and solid pattern that there is no external reason whatever why one of the half-hundred should call for notice more than any other, except in so far that a little more or a little less attention to outside painting might give it a little more individual character than was possessed by its neighbours. That of the house in question was gained from the less care that had been bestowed upon the whitening of the sepulchre: in fact, the time at which its tenant was bound by the terms of his lease to give it at least two coats of paint must either have been on the very eve of arriving, or else must have just elapsed without the covenant having been fulfilled. Otherwise, there was absolutely nothing remarkable about it one way or another, except that its number, painted in dirty white letters upon the dirtier green door, was 32, and that at a proper distance below the number was a dingy brass plate, bearing the name of Mr. Grode. In spite, however, of this symptom of surgery, the absence of coloured lantern and night-bell saved Mr. Grode, whoever he might be, from being aroused by impatient patients at unreasonable hours.

But there is nothing gained by standing outside a door. Where, in that case, would be any story, from the days of the Bachelor of Salamanca to our own? Without, all looked dull and uncomfortable: but within, all was sufficiently comfortable, though still sufficiently dull. It is true that the remembrance of November fogs never quite vanished from the hall and staircase—both rather handsome in their way—even in the spring:

but otherwise, no one could deny that the neighbourhood had been turned from open fields into streets in days when people built houses to be lived in—not merely to be let. The most satisfactory room in the house, at all events in the morning, was the dining-room at the back, looking into a small gravel yard that was called a garden; not so much because it was furnished for absolute comfort, as because it showed most signs of being really used—because convenience, and not an exigent eye for symmetrical arrangement, had dictated the positions of the chairs, and because the articles that lay upon the table were there for use, and not for show—because the work-box was open, and lying in a nest of nondescript needle-work that had but just been laid down. It is true that on a damp and raw December day there might with advantage have been a better fire in the stove; but then coals are not things to be wasted, and the day, though in December, was not exactly cold. On the whole, the room—in spite of its shabby green leather chairs, its dingy carpet, and its faded window-curtains—might pass, supposing its occupants to have sufficient animal spirits within them not to mind a little outside depressiveness about their surroundings.

But an habitual inhabitant of the front parlour must have required a natural insensibility to his surroundings quite abnormal. It had been furnished once upon a time, no doubt; but the once upon a time must have been a very long time ago indeed. They say it takes a hundred years for dust to gather an inch deep. If so, one or two of the articles of furniture must have been invaluable to antiquarians who measure the value of a thing by its age. That cabinet, in spite of its modern build, must have been contemporary with Julius Cæsar; that solitary arm-chair, of King Lear. In fact, dust was wherever dust may be, excepting—so far as the accumulation of darkness in a room into which the sun never shone enabled one to see—upon a portion of the leather-topped central table, upon one chair that stood before it, and upon a man who was stooping over the table and sitting in the chair.

It was difficult to account for the *raison-d'être* of the room at all, except upon the celebrated principle of *lucus a non lucendo*. On that principle, however, it was easy. It might, for instance, be a library, for it did not contain a single book; it might be the cabinet of a collector, for nothing was collected in it but dust and darkness; it might be a studio, for there were no signs of the pursuit of art in it, any more than of the pursuit of anything else, save in the shape of three pictures that leaned against the wall, with their faces inwards, and of which, therefore, the tarnished gilt frames were alone visible.

He who sat busily at the table making memoranda with a gold pencil-case on a scrap of paper did not look altogether out of place in the room, for he somehow looked as though, if not gifted with an excess of animal spirits, he was of a temperament that was able to dispense with them. There are some men, whom it is easy to recognize at first sight, who do not, like most, take their tone from the surrounding atmosphere, but who,

whatever may be their surroundings, live and move in an atmosphere that, as it were, exhales from themselves. The dust and the gloom seemed somehow to be natural accessories of the man; and yet he was himself neither dusty nor gloomy, at least in appearance. Soap-and-water, the laundress, and the clothes-brush had done their work upon him well. For the rest, he was about fifty years old, rather less, perhaps, than more, was well preserved for his age, full, broad-shouldered, muscular, and inclining to corpulence. His full face was fresh-complexioned and rosy; his hair dark and coarse, but growing grizzled and bald; his eyes dark and large; his teeth large and white; and the expression of his full and heavy mouth was made up of many things—of a little sensuality, a little obstinacy, a little selfishness, and a great deal of hard, self-reliant, unsympathetic energy; not an altogether agreeable expression, but certainly not that of a weak man or of a fool. What was his habitual calling or occupation would be difficult to decide. At present, he was absorbed in his memoranda. At last he laid the paper down upon the table, placed the pencil-case in his waistcoat-pocket, and rang the bell sharply.

It was answered almost immediately by a rather pretty girl, about whose French birth there could be no mistake, any more than about a greater tendency on her part to ribbons and bright colours than would have been allowed to a maid-servant, in that terribly respectable neighbourhood, under strict feminine rule.

“Elise, tell Miss Felicia to come to me immediately,” he said, in a loud and despotic voice, that at once harmonised the expression of his whole person to an unmistakable key of coarseness and vulgarity. Like many others, he was passable enough as long as he held his tongue.

He rose from his seat, and stood bolt upright on the hearth-rug, with his back to the fire and his hands behind him, in the favourite attitude of Englishmen, with his full lips pressed tightly together, and with a frown, or rather an incipient scowl, on his forehead, until, after the expiration of a few minutes, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the voice of a girl, clear though timid, asked: “May I come in?”

“Well,” he said, as the door opened, “I can’t say you’ve hurried yourself. Do you think everybody’s time’s as cheap as yours? It’s just seven minutes since I sent Elise after you.”

It is to be hoped that Miss Felicia liked being bullied: at all events his tone was that of one who liked to bully. She only said, quietly, “I was as quick as I could, papa;” and then, closing the door gently behind her, she stood and waited for what he had to say.

The best way to describe Miss Felicia is to take the description of her father given above, and to read it by contraries. That is to say, she was, in the first place, a very long way short of fifty years old indeed—in fact, by some two and thirty years, rather more than less; and she did not look over strong for an age at which the growth of strength should by rights be most vigorous. Her features were small, and almost too delicate even to be in keeping with her small and delicate figure, and were shaded

over by a cloud of hair that was very fair, very profuse, and very fine ; neither golden, however, nor flaxen, but more of the hue that the French term *blond cendré* : and yet it had something of golden brightness about it too. Her complexion was beautifully clear, but almost too pale, with just so much colouring as a white rose may have without ceasing to be a white rose. In all this, though there was much that was attractive, there was nothing very distinguished or remarkable. But, as in her father's case, it was the voice that was the characteristic feature, so, in hers, her distinctive personality seemed to express itself in her eyes. They were rather large, and were of an undefined grey, almost opal-tinted in many lights, and almost pale blue in others—always, however, of a singular but bright and speaking colour, that gave her face a peculiar kind of attraction. Unlike blue eyes in general—if, indeed, they were blue—they had a positive, and not a negative, expression ; they seemed, like the opal itself, actually to emit a living, many-hued light, instead of merely feebly reflecting the hue of the sky. The light, moreover, was not always there ; it seemed to come in frequent fits and flashes, and never without an inner cause. This peculiarity about her—for it was a peculiarity, and a great one—rendered her by no means easy to read, except in so far as it was certain that there could be nothing behind such a veil that needed concealment. The light, when it came, was far too soft, the lips too willing to smile, to have much to hide that was anything but sweet and good and pure.

"So," he went on, "I want to ask you a question or two. And don't stand there all day before you answer, because I must go out. And what's more, you'd better tell me the truth at once, because I shall be sure to find you out unless you do."

The tint upon her cheeks deepened just a little at what was almost like an accusation of falsehood.

"Do you remember what I said to you only this day three weeks in this very room, and what you said to me ?"

The colour became almost damask now.

"Can't you answer me, instead of standing there and looking like a red cabbage ?" he said, following her example in his own way. "Do you remember, I say ?"

But as she only looked down upon the ground, and occupied herself with drawing lines upon the carpet with her foot, he had to answer himself.

"What did I tell you ? That you were never to see or speak to that fellow again—that ruined spendthrift, who has thrown away his own millions, and now comes to you to get hold of your thousands—yes, your thousands—to throw them away, too ? And didn't you promise me that without my consent you never would ? And didn't I tell you flat that my consent you never should have, no, not if you were to grow as old as Mathusilum ? Did I, or didn't I ?"

"Yes," she answered, without interrupting her occupation.

"And have you, or haven't you ?"

"You are not quite right, papa," she said, looking up, and with more

firmness in her tone than might have been expected. "He is not a spend-thrift. How could he help his misfortunes? And I only promised that I would not see or write to Arthur—to Mr. Cranstoun—till I was twenty-one—unless you allowed me."

"And are you twenty-one, pray?"

"Not yet," and she heaved a deep sigh. "I wish——"

"You wish you was, do you? Well, wishing's not having—and for that matter, promises is sometimes like pie-crust."

"Papa!"

"Then what do you call this, pray?" And he held up an envelope so that she might just see the direction to "Miss Felicia Grode."

With an eager exclamation she reached out her hand; but he quietly put the letter into his breast-pocket and buttoned his coat.

"Not if I know it, miss," he said. "So that's how you keep your promises!"

"But it is for me," she said, with a little of the stubbornness of his dark eyes reflected in her opal ones. "I have not written to him, and will not; and I'm sure he would not have written to me without a reason. Please, only this once!"

"Not if I know it." And while she stood blushing, flushing, and indignant before him, he took the letter again from his pocket, tore it open, and read it himself. His dark eyes grew black as thunder. "Pretty goings on!" he said, with a glare at her; and then crumpling up the letter, envelope and all, tossed it behind him into the fire.

He then rebuttoned his coat, resumed his position, and continued to scowl. At last his eye, as it was about to leave hers, was suddenly arrested at the point of her dress at which, just above her bosom, she wore a brooch, consisting of a green stone not particularly well cut, and set clumsily and ineffectively in an old-fashioned rim of gold.

"What is that trash you are wearing?" he asked suddenly.

"It is a brooch, papa. And——"

"Any fool can see it's a brooch. Who gave it you?"

"Arthur."

"Gives brooches, does he? He had better keep his money to buy bread and cheese. I've a great mind to tell you to send it back to him, only——" He paused: after all, he was not the sort of man to counsel the restoration of a pin, if he or his had got hold of it for nothing. So he went on—"only never you let me see you wear it again. And such an ugly thing, too—only fit for your grandmother! He must have bought it cheap in Wardour Street. And I tell you what," he went on, his mind suddenly returning to the unfortunate letter, now long reduced to ashes, "if this ever happens again, I'll just turn you neck and crop out of doors, and Elise after you. A pretty thing, if I'm to be bullied by my own daughter in my own house!"

And he would, doubtless, have gone on being thus bullied by her had she not, in a passion of tears, left the room.

CHAPTER III.

A BATTLE ROYAL.

It was not long, however, before he fully recovered his serenity. Then, looking at his heavy gold watch, the hands of which stood at half-past eleven, he took up his hat and gold-headed cane, left the house, and turned his steps westward.

He walked along, rapid and self-absorbed, until he reached a cab-stand, where he gave the order, "Grosvenor Square!"

While the front of his own house had been barely distinguishable from the fronts of its neighbours, that of the house within a few yards of which he stopped his cab and descended was distinguishable only too well. It was in itself a large and handsome house, even among large and handsome houses: but over it, in place of a hatchment, seemed legibly to be written "Ichabod"—its glory had departed. It was in the travail of a sale.

Before the door stood carts and vans, in the midst of a litter of straw and of humanity, all inextricably mixed together in one inharmonious whole. The aspect of any dwelling which has been given over to the auctioneers is one of the most melancholy sights in this world of melancholy things, as every one knows always. But in this case there were circumstances which rendered it even exceptionally melancholy.

The great firm of Cranstoun and Cranstoun had been well known for some hundred years as being one of the first, not only in London, but in the whole world: so much so that its members belonged to the real aristocracy not so much of trade as of finance—that they had indeed become almost royal in their way, and something much more than royal in their influence upon politics, both abroad and at home. There was a certain magnificence, too, about the character of the late Mr. Cranstoun that seemed to be in keeping with and to support his position. He had contented himself with exercising only the most general supervision over the affairs of the firm, leaving its details to be carried on by subordinates, and being seldom, in person, accessible to any but ambassadors and ministers of State; while, in his private life, he avoided the society of the merely social aristocracy, and devoted himself to the patronage of art and literature, and to the furtherance of great philanthropic schemes. He was but little seen at "At homes," or at great country-houses; but his name was as well known among the studios and among those who read the reports of charitable societies as upon the Stock Exchange, while his house in Grosvenor Square was a central point of union for all who had any claim to distinction other than that of mere rank—a regular menagerie of lions. If he was seldom met with in the character of a guest, he was a host of the first water; and at least half the good grain that redeems the ordinary chaff of London conversation was to be found at his table.

He had but one child, a son, whose education and training had been something like that of a Prince Royal. He had not been sent to any

public school, but had been surrounded from his cradle with tutors of the highest class that money could procure. Instead of going to a University he had been sent to travel all over Europe and beyond it : and everything had been done for him that could be considered to qualify him for a station of life even above that to which he had been called. Fortunately—for such elaborate processes of education are dangerous—the disposition of the sole heir to so much wealth was good by nature, and, still more fortunately—for training is even more important than nature—the atmosphere in which he had been brought up was such as of necessity to give him an interest in the greater and higher movements of men. But the very men with whom he was brought most in contact—the authors, the artists, the philanthropists, the enthusiasts of the day—were not such as were, under the circumstances, most fitted by the influence of their society to render him a model son. It was not that he ever gave his father the least uneasiness on the score of his morals : but he readily imbibed a tendency, only too easy of indulgence, to take every opportunity of flying in the face of the world and of doing *outré* things simply because they were *outré*. He soon began to be a great deal talked about and very little understood. His instincts were generous and true in the main, and it was simply out of the question that he should ever swell the ranks of the *jeunesse orageuse*—a body that would have even voted him a milksop if it had not redeemed him by calling him a madman. But he wanted to live a life of his own, and to carry out his own ideas : and his own life was so large, and his own ideas so many, that it was very hard for him to turn his energies into any special direction.

He shared in every passing mania of the day, so long as it was unpopular and what he considered anti-Philistine. At one time he was on the point of turning Catholic, and of joining either the Society of Loyola or the Brotherhood of La Trappe—he had not quite made up his mind to which he should present his golden apple—so nearly that had not so many conversions taken place about the same time as to make such a step seem popular and Philistine, he would inevitably have done so. So, instead of that, he affiliated himself to some foreign secret society, for the political and social regeneration of the universe, and, for some time, played at conspiracy. Then, finding that this, too, was vanity, he turned solitary, and spent the whole of a summer and autumn in an out-of-the-way corner in the country, in the study of magic and in the search for the Alcahest. In short, there were few sublime absurdities of which he had not been guilty—always excepting the follies and absurdities of the everyday world. He was a very promising Don Quixote indeed. But, at last—it was at the period at which he was engaged in inventing a bran-new religion, with an esoteric and exoteric form, built upon the basis of Neo-Platonism and the Positive Philosophy—he suddenly came to a stand-still, which puzzled his acquaintances more than ever. His new caprice seemed to consist in being without a caprice at all. There was nothing now in which he could be got to show an active and lively interest ; and yet, at

the same time, he showed no signs of becoming bored or *blasé*. And he became graver also, and more reserved : for hitherto he had always thrown himself into his ideas combatively. It was either that he was on the eve of developing into a real man, who makes up his mind to see things as they are, and not as he would have them be, or else it was that that had happened to him which sooner or later, at first or at last, comes to all, and interferes terribly with the pursuit of philosophy.

This latter thought troubled his father terribly, who had set his heart by continuing the great house by means of a magnificent alliance ; and he knew it to be only too probable that his son would—just because it would be *outré* and un-Philistine—play the part of King Cophetua, on principle. So he watched him as closely as he could ; but it was without success. He could only discover that his son was in the habit of taking a walk at a certain hour nearly every day, and that his walk was generally a long one, reckoning by time. He would have given a great many thousands of pounds that his son might turn out to be even wild and extravagant, so that he might be a little more like other young men.

Things were in this position when, one day, the whole world was amazed to hear that the great potentate of commerce had been found by his valet, when the latter went to call him as usual in the morning, lying dead upon the floor, with a bottle of prussic acid by his side : and then it was not amazed to hear that the affairs of the House had been going all wrong for any number of years, and that the only wonder was that it had not collapsed long before. Its fall was complete. Some of its members were tried on criminal charges, and their acquittal did not prevent the temporary paralysis of trade. It would simply be too great a labour to write down the number of figures necessary to represent its liabilities.

But still the heir to the head of the bankrupt house was not left destitute. By some process of settlements, he was still master of more than a competence, and of the furniture and valuable collection of pictures contained in the house in Grosvenor Square.

Now, therefore, was the time and opportunity for him to make a grand *coup* after his own heart. The competence he threw away at once in mitigating the ruin of many suffering homes, and a sale was advertized of all the furniture and of all the pictures. People still thought him mad ; but they could not deny that there was something like heroism in his madness.

It was this sale that was so punctually attended by Mr. Grode ; and it was a sale to be seen with envious eyes by those of slender purses and many desires. I will not copy the catalogue, nor even attempt to estimate what it contained. Suffice it to say that, to contribute to its contents, Sèvres, and Golconda, and Damascus, and Lyons, and, better still, Florence, and Venice, and Rome had done their best, and that the courts of kings and the galleries of nations became ennobled by the fall of the house of Cranstoun. Among the ordinary herd of brokers and dealers were to be seen purchasers of a different order from those who are usually to be found

at sales—there were special envoys and plenipotentiaries from almost every great centre of art and luxury in Europe, silent, reserved, and diplomatic—eagles among the crew of chattering vultures. Through the latter, by most of whom he appeared to be well known, Mr. Grode elbowed his way until he reached the vast saloon in which the auctioneer had raised his throne. Then he seated himself at a long table, took out his gold pencil-case once more, and looked as though he meant work in earnest.

But, for the present, he made no outward sign. Lot after lot fell beneath the hammer, but for not one did he make a single bid, except, as it seemed, for pastime, without any real intention of securing what he scarcely looked at when it was displayed. To-day was set apart for the sale of the pictures. There were Guidos, Titians, Rubenses, Rafaels, nay, even Sodomas and Michael Angelos, every one of which went at some price that would be more appropriate to a story in the *Arabian Nights* than to the prosaic columns of the journals that chronicled it the next day. Long and heavy were the battles that were fought over them. At last, however, they were dispersed—some to Paris, some to Munich, some to great private galleries, some to the dealers; the disposal of the lesser fry began, and, at a late hour, the room began to clear. Still, even the lesser fry have their value, and a few bidders, principally brokers, remained. After a few score pictures of minor importance had gone for fairly-good prices, the porter placed in front of the auctioneer's desk a small oil painting in a plain gilt frame, to which even the most ignorant could ascribe no more value than that of a few shillings—perhaps, fifteen, at the very outside—unless, of course, its painter should happen to have a name. The auctioneer looked just a little ashamed. Indeed, there was no apparent reason at all why such a minnow as this should have found a place among the tritons, unless it arose from a conscientious desire on the part of the vendor to give up all he had, even to the uttermost farthing.

“*The Dead Magpie. By Jones.*” Such was its description in the catalogue. And, in fact, it represented an ill-drawn bird, in a conventional position, with its feathers looking as though they had been carved out of wood, lying upon a dirty-white table-cloth. In size it was about eighteen inches by ten. Its surface was cracked and scratched all over, and the frame was mouldy and fly-blown. On the whole, perhaps, zero would have represented its artistic value more accurately than even fifteen farthings. Rubbish such as this will somehow find its way into the best collections. Perhaps Jones had been a poor drawing-master, with a starving wife and family, and this particular piece of rubbish had been bought out of charity.

Still, there are people who speculate in dead magpies rather than not speculate at all.

“A 'arf-crown,” suggested one dealer, after a pause.

Mr. Grode, as if to continue his occasional pastime, nodded. If he chose to give three-and-sixpence for a memento of this great sale, why should he not indulge his whim? It would admirably suit the dust of his front parlour.

The pale sherry in which some of the purchasers had been indulging at discretion, or at indiscretion, during the day made a joke not unseasonable after the serious business was over.

"Where's Sir C—— E——?" said one of the dealers. "Blessed if this here oughtn't to go to the National. Four-and-six—there! and tell the R.A.'s to give me a call in Wardour Street. I won't be hard on 'em."

"Five-and-six," said Mr. Grode, carelessly, scarcely raising his eyes for a moment from the catalogue which he was studying intently.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the last bidder, who seemed to be the comic man among his brotherhood. "So I'm not to make my fortune this time. Well, I've saved a 'arf-crown anyway, for I'm blessed if I could have got two bob for it."

The auctioneer was just about to get rid of so unprofitable a piece of rubbish as quickly as possible, when one of the most active bidders in the room, who had fought freely, and not unsuccessfully, for Titians and Rembrandts, said suddenly, in a sharp Hebrew voice, "Sheven!"

It was like an electric shock. All turned round and stared; and then a laugh ran round the room at such a triumph of facetiousness.

But the provoker of the mirth deserves—nay, demands—some further description.

He was very short in stature, almost dwarfish, with a pot-belly, and with shoulders so round as to make him almost a hunchback, one of them being rather higher than the other. His chin, adorned with a coarse beard of grizzled red, hung down upon his breast, which was formed something like that of a pigeon. His arms, considering his height, were of a prodigious length, reaching almost to his knee when he stood as upright as his figure would allow—at least, that which belonged to the lower shoulder; and, while his legs were short in contrary proportion, his flat feet and his coarse, red hands, of which the dirt was half concealed by a cartload of valuable rings, were large enough for a man seven feet high. His head, bald at the poll, but otherwise covered with shock, uncombed hair of the same colour as the beard, was also gigantic: so large, in fact, that it seemed to hang down over the breast by reason of its own weight rather than because of the malformation of the shoulders, and to have crushed what ought to have been neck into nothingness, so that the lobes of the huge ears touched the shoulder-blades. But the face, which thus seemed to be in the mathematical centre of all this deformity, was the most remarkable part of it all. I do not think anything more unutterably hideous was ever seen: it required a skilful painter to describe it, and even Pauson himself, the great precursor of all painters of the hideous, would scarcely have done it justice. There was absolutely no forehead: a scarlet line instead of eyebrows filled up the entire space between the eyes and the limit of the hair. Beneath this scarlet line gleamed two obliquely set eyes, like those of a cat in all respects save that while in certain lights one of them became yellow, the other

invariably remained of a dull green colour, and that they squinted towards one another as if the point of their owner's nose was the only thing in creation worth regarding. Nor, if they thought so, were they altogether without justification for their belief. The nose in question was of vast size, seeming to project in its bold curve beyond the pigeon-breast ; its form was that of the segment of a circle, of which the most advanced point, instead of being the tip, was the bridge, while the tip itself was so depressed that it would have interfered with the upper lip were it not that the whole cumbrous machine bore so much to the right hand as to leave the mouth as much master of the situation as if there had been no nose at all. In colour, it was that of raw flesh, and it seemed to tremble like calves'-foot jelly when its wearer moved. The mouth was large, and grotesquely shaped, with immense and monstrously thick lips, always wide apart, of which the upper was unshaved, and the lower excessively pendulous ; and both, in their separation, displayed two broken rows of huge yellow jagged teeth, one eye-tooth resembling a tusk that stuck out horribly, and as if intended for a formidable weapon of offence. The whiskers upon the broad, pucker'd cheeks were thin and sparse, thus revealing, in all their leaden-hued loathsomeness, the pits, or rather the caverns, with which the small-pox had covered the whole face, and the pimples, or rather hillocks, with which the caverns were relieved. The long finger-nails, like talons, were grimed with black, as though they had not been cut or trimmed for many a Sabbath-eve. But in other respects his person was not ill-cared for. He had plastered his head with half the contents of a barber's shop, to judge from the greasiness of its appearance and from the mingled odours, not of the most refined kind, which it seemed to exhale. His coat was of the best blue cloth, and fashionably cut ; his waistcoat of seal-skin, over which two large golden watch-guards meandered in massy folds ; his trousers were plaid, of a "loud" pattern ; his cravat, fastened by a valuable diamond pin, was scarlet ; and, over all, he wore a loose white great-coat with a velvet collar. His whole effect was as bizarre as it was hideous, and defied all analysis of expression, except that the movements of his hands and the tone of his voice all told of an unutterable and all-pervading greed.

But, however remarkable his appearance might be, it did not appear to call forth the amount of personal remarks that might have been expected. In fact, it seemed to be familiar to most who were there, and he himself to be treated with a sort of chaffing respect by the professional buyers different from the more distant respect that was paid to Mr. Grode. The only special attention that he attracted to himself seemed to be provoked by the single word "Sheven ! "

Mr. Grode looked up almost angrily. He did not like to be made a butt of.

"Half a guinea ! " he said, decisively. The auctioneer looked surprised and interested, and began to find imaginary merits in the picture that had hitherto escaped his practised eye.

The new bidder also looked interested. He turned his squinting eyes apparently towards the door, but, in reality, full upon the dead magpie. Mr. Grode was not the man, as he well knew, to throw away shillings for nothing, and yet for nothing it seemed.

“ Fifteen ! ”

“ Twenty ! ”

“ Five-and-twenty ! ”

The outside value of the picture had long been passed. But the manner of Mr. Grode had become just a little anxious—imperceptibly to those who had the power of looking straight, but not to those squinting eyes, which could see readily enough what was to their owner’s advantage.

At last, as the bids increased, even the bystanders could perceive that this was not a mere joke on the part of the dwarf, any more than that it was any longer a mere pastime on that of his rival.

“ Grode means to have that picture,” said one.

“ And old Levi sees that, and doesn’t mean to let him,” said another. Do you remember that sale at Lord St. Kenelm’s ? Levi’s a cute customer in some things, but don’t know a Hetty from a Wandyke. I noticed he always followed Grode’s lead.”

A little crowd collected round the daub, but only to shake its many heads.

“ Hany way this ’ll be a bad bargain,” said one great art critic. “ Hi wouldn’t give a bad tanner for it.”

The last bid had been ten pounds on the part of Mr. Grode. The Hunchback capped it by fifteen.

This was startling. But it is impossible to describe the excitement that followed. It was simply unparalleled in the history of auctions. A mania seemed to have seized both the opponents, and to have gradually extended itself to the lookers on. Applause began to resound, which, however, soon resolved itself into breathless silence. If the shade of Jones could only have been present, that great unknown master would at last have felt that he had not lived in vain. Bets were freely offered and taken, some backing Mr. Grode, others the Hunchback.

“ A hundred ! ” at last exclaimed the latter.

“ A hundred-and-fifty ! ”

“ And seventy-five ! ”

“ Two hundred ! ” cried Mr. Grode, triumphantly bringing his fist down upon the table.

“ And fifty ! ” cried the Hunchback, excitedly. “ Here goesh ! Damned if I give in now ! ”

It seemed to have become a point of honour, for whose sake men are content to ruin themselves for a mere caprice.

“ Three hundred ! ” said Mr. Grode, with the perspiration streaming from his forehead.

“ Three-fifty ! ” said the other.

It was not shillings they were offering—it was pounds.

"I say, Levi," said one of the brokers, apparently of his own persuasion, "what is it?"

"Ah," said the latter, "help me—four-fifty—Moses—five-fifty—Grode onshe—six-fifty—did me like this—eight—before—thoushand—he bought—twelve—what looked like—fourteen—jusht such rubbish—siksh-teen—ash thish—and it—eighteen—turned out—twenty-five—ash there wash—three thousand !—underneath, such a Rubensh!—Five!—lovely!—he cleared—sheven!—ten thousand by it—eight—he knowsh all about these thingsh—eleven—and he wouldn't—twelve—go ahead like thish if he didn't know ash there wash shomething behind—fourteen.—Sho here goesh!—shikshteen—sheventeen—eighteen—I can shtand it!"

"Curse you!" muttered Grode to himself. "Twenty thousand!"

"Guineash!" cried the Hunchback.

"Twenty-five!"

There is no need to proceed. A glorious Titian, now the pride of one of the greatest galleries in Europe, was sold at that sale for eight thousand pounds: the "Dead Magpie," by Jones, went to the Hunchback for eighty thousand.

CHAPTER IV.

SIC VITA EST.

MR. GRODE threw a glance of angry hatred at his successful rival, and then came up to him blandly.

"I wish you joy of your bargain!" he said, half politely, half sneeringly. "Do you know that you'll have to pay for this rubbish? I don't suppose that Mr. Cranstoun will consider it quite so much a joke as you and I."

"I can afford it, Mishter," answered Levi, slapping his trouser-pocket.

"I want that picture," said Mr. Grode, bluntly and candidly. "Old associations, and all that sort of thing, you know—never mind what. One must be sentimental and soft-hearted sometimes, you know, hang it all! Tell you what, I'll give you eighty-five thousand to be off your bargain—there's a chance for you! Eighty thousand all at once, and five thousand in six months. It'll all be clear profit on a daub not worth twopence farthing. You'll be a rich man, Levi; and you'll have the pleasure of taking me in besides. Eighty-five thousand!"

"Guineash?"

"Guineas."

"I'll just take a peep at him firsh. Maybe he ish more than he looksh," replied the Jew, passing his hand over the cracked surface of the picture meaningly and tenderly.

Grode fidgeted and perspired. "No," he said, "now—on the nail. I mayn't be sentimental in five minutes. I'm an ass, as it is, to want

to spend eighty-five thousand guineas for old associations' sake. Come, Levi, is it done?"

"No, Mishter, you're not an ass—neither am I," he answered. "So I'll jusht take a look at him."

"And lose eighty-five thousand guineas? On my soul, I can't offer a penny more. Perhaps by to-night I shall have come down to eighty-five pence—and if I sleep on it—"

"Never you mind, Mishter. If you vantsh him, you will vant him to-morrow ash vell. Sho I vill shleep upon him too."

"You're a ——." No matter how Mr. Grode finished the sentence. With another angry glare round him he left the room and the house.

"Mishter Grode ish a very shentimental man—very: and sho am I, said Levi to one of his fellow-dealers, with a tremendous wink of his green eye, as he took his prize under his arm.

His defeated rival for the charms of the dead magpie was certainly in a most violent rage. His fresh complexion had deepened to an apoplectic red, his veins were swollen, his scowl was as black as midnight, and he strode rapidly along, with his fists closed almost desperately.

At last his seven-leagued boots carried him on his way home as far as Russell Square. He walked on the garden-side of the road; and, suddenly happening to raise his eyes as he passed the railings, saw within them a sight that increased tenfold his symptoms of anger, except that it caused him to stand as still as if he had been struck to stone. And yet the sight that he saw was charming enough in its way. It was nothing less than that of a pair of lovers engaged in the closest and most affectionate conversation, so much wrapped up in themselves and in each other as to be almost heedless of the almost public character of the place in which they were.

With an oath, he hurried onwards to the gate, but found it locked, so that he was obliged to go home for his own key, before he could turn the duet into a trio. He thundered at his own door as if he were a visitor's footman, and, having strode in, searched violently for the key in every drawer and cupboard of every room in the house, littering every floor with the contents of them; but it was not to be found. So at last he rang the bell, like a man in a thundering passion as he was, and shouted out to the maid-servant who had answered him before, "Where's the key of the Square?"

"Please, sir, Miss Felicia has taken it."

He stamped and swore till he almost made her gay ribbons uncurl themselves and stand on end. But there was nothing to be done immediately, except to pace up and down like a hyena in a fume: a task which he set himself accordingly.

Meanwhile, this had been the history of Miss Felicia.

It may be remembered that her father had sent her crying to her room, or rather on her way thither, for she was encountered on the stairs before she reached it by Elise, who, not perceiving the state of distress in

which her young mistress was, spoke to her with an air of knowing mystery.

"Oh, m'selle," she said, feeling in the pocket of her dress, "I have a letter for you."

"For me?" exclaimed poor Felicia, while her tears stopped themselves suddenly in their course, leaving her eyes bright and clear.

"Yes, m'selle." And the girl continued her search, while Felicia stood there impatiently on the stairs with outstretched hand.

First the girl searched in one pocket, and then in another; she felt herself all over, and ended by giving herself a good shake, to see if what she sought might chance to drop upon the floor; but the missing note was nowhere to be found. A horrible thought flashed into the mind of Felicia. She remembered the letter that she had already seen in her father's hand, and which had long since been reduced to ashes. Had she been a man, she would have sworn, and have probably included in her wrath the innocent Elise. But as it was, "Oh, Elise!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, "you have lost it—you must have let it fall somewhere! I know where it is—you need not look for it any more."

"I must have dropped it, I am afraid, m'selle. But you have found it, then?"

But Felicia did not remain to reply. She had run, or rather flown, upstairs, and was in a few seconds safely bolted in her own room, where she threw herself on her bed, and let her tears fairly come.

It was long before their flood was over; but it exhausted itself at last, and left behind it a bad headache and a feverish desire for active movement, in spite of the pain; but as there was absolutely nothing to do, unless she broke her promise—a proceeding that never even suggested itself to her—she adopted the only possible outlet for her energy by putting on her bonnet and shawl, and going to walk in the great, black, leafless garden of the Square, which is pretty enough in the month of lilacs and laburnums, but which in that of mud and snow was exactly in sympathy with her dull wretchedness. Her lover, she knew, would not have communicated with her thus without some special reason and without sufficient cause; and to think that, at that very moment, for aught she knew, or could ever know, he might be ill, or unhappy, or expecting her to do something of the last importance, was simply distracting.

There was good reason why she should choose that garden for her walk. How often had she been there with him—not only in the month of lilacs, but in every month of her year of love! So she entered it, and walked up and down, only avoiding that part of it which had hitherto been their trysting-place. She had not the heart to look upon it now that she had become the most miserable girl in the whole world. It is true that many who have learned the intimate connection of the bitter with the sweet and the sweet with the bitter, would, seeing that she had the consciousness of loving and of being loved, have held her to be a subject rather of envy than of pity. But love invariably hugs to itself the bitter in preference to

the sweet, and rejoices in misery: if it can manage to be miserable it will. It forgets that such wretchedness itself is sweet, and that there are plenty of prosperous and satisfied and not unhappy men and women in the world who would give more than half they possess to recover those happy days when they were so unhappy. But then Felicia was too young to prize her unhappiness as it deserved to be prized.

Foolish girl! Those black, barren shrubs, that looked as though they could never bear anything but festoons of soot, were preparing for her even now a glorious surprise. As she came slowly along one of the paths, called by courtesy of gravel, she became aware that she was no longer enjoying the luxury of solitude. She suddenly looked up, and it was He.

He was—well, what matters it what he was like, when we regard him through her opal eyes? But to other eyes also, besides hers, he was quite passable, being, although still quite young, a man, and a good-looking and honest-looking one: a little grave, as becomes one who is not without brains, and gentle-looking, as becomes a gentleman.

“My own darling!” he said, as he took her hand. “I thought you were never coming. Why did you not go at once to our old meeting place? You would have found me there an hour ago. I had given you up, and was just going away.”

“You came to meet me, then?”

“What else should I come for? Do you mean to say that you are here by accident!” He asked with a half smile, looking down upon her tenderly, like one who knows that he has a right to answer his own questions in his own way.

“Quite by accident! How could I guess? Should I have come to meet you after——”

“After your promise to your father? Yes, I know that. But such a promise as that could not be meant to forbid one meeting more—one last meeting, perhaps for three whole years! My darling, I must have seen you this once in spite of all things. I should be miserable unless you gave me just one parting word from your own lips, to tell me that you will be always as true as I shall be, even though I know I ought to trust you even without any last word. And you say you would not have come!”

“I never said so, Arthur dearest,” said the lips, while the eyes looked up shyly, reflecting the tenderness of his, but emitting, besides, an even more tender light of their own.

“And yet you come by accident? Well, I must thank Fate then—that is to say you, darling, after all, for I know of no fate but you.”

She had meanwhile passed her arm through his, or he had placed it there—what matters which?—and he had taken her hand in his own. It was in this position that they were seen by Mr. Grode on his way from the sale. It was a trying situation, surely, for an enraged father, to have nothing but a row of railing between himself and such a scene

that was thereby rendered visible, but not therefore rendered any the more capable of being disturbed.

"Did you not get my letter then? I gave it to Elise," asked Felicia's lover, after a pause.

"Papa found it, and burned it without letting me have it."

"Your father is—well I must not say, I suppose, what I think your father is, but I do think so all the same. I asked you to meet me at our old place, for the last time, that we might promise to be true to each other before we part for these three long years. How long they will be to me God knows."

The tears were coming into her eyes once more: and just one or two, after a hard struggle to restrain them, fell to the ground. The hearts of both felt far too heavy and too full for words now.

This, however, was something like the effect of what he managed to say to her during their walk up and down the gravel path, during the two hours that seemed like two minutes to them, but which were quite long enough to change at all events the outside light into darkness.

"Do you remember, Pearl, how I first met you? How you first gave me life and made me a man?" This process of remembering what was perfectly well known to both without any such process took up at least a quarter of the two hours. "Then your father was only too glad to welcome my father's heir for his son: he was as glad as my own poor father would have been to welcome you, my own Pearl, for his daughter when he came to know all. Well, I am a poor man now, and shall have to work for my Pearl, like Jacob for Rachel. I am not afraid, though I have not a penny, and shall ask no man to aid me." This was another of his Quixotisms. "Since you have promised to wait for me till you can be my wife with your father's consent or without, I will wait and work for you patiently, with as perfect a trust for you as I would have you put in me. Nothing in the world shall tempt me from you; not for a moment shall I forget you. But tell me once more that, when the time for waiting is past, you will come to me then?"

The time was too short to indulge even in so much as a pretence of coquetry, even if his earnestness had not been enough to prevent it.

"And I, too," she said, at least in effect, "I, too, will think of you but once, but that once will be always. Not one instant will pass that I do not think of you and love you—not one! And the moment that I may I will come to you, whether you are rich or poor—yes, whether you want me or no. I will make you need me. There, I promise with my whole heart! Will that content you? And now, good-by for the last time."

"No, not for the last time," he exclaimed, passionately, taking her closely to his heart. It was dark now, so that their parting for three years could not have been seen, even had there been any eyes to see.

She forbade him resolutely to follow her farther than the gate, and then hurried home, almost running in her haste, while he strained his

eyes after her as she vanished in the mist and gas-light. Then he somehow managed to gather himself together and to go his way.

Felicia had, indeed, need to hurry, for a neighbouring church-clock had warned her that it was past her father's dinner-time. She did not know how little inclined he was for dinner to-day, or she would not, perhaps, have taken such pains to rap almost inaudibly at the street-door, in the hope of entering without his knowing of her return, so that she might be able to descend from her room as if she had only been rather longer over her dressing than usual. In this manœuvre she succeeded, and joined her father in the dining-room without his observing any very excessive signs of agitation, in spite of her hurry and of her headache which was now returning, and which made her feel really ill.

But as soon as she entered the room she felt that somehow something was wrong. She had often seen her father in a storm before; indeed, had not she herself been caught in a gust of it only that very morning? and she saw that it had now gathered in all its force. Of course her guilty conscience told her that the storm was for her: and, though she was wrong in the main, she was not altogether wrong. In any case, after his disappointment of the morning, the storm would have been there: but it would not have broken upon her in the way that it did unless she herself had given cause.

"Where have you been this afternoon?" he asked suddenly, as soon as she had entered the room.

"Only into the Square," she answered, timidly. "I am afraid I am rather late."

"Don't tell me any lies. You *are* late. And what's the reason, pray?"

"I don't know—I am very sorry. Shall I ring the bell? Dinner must be quite ready now."

"No, confound you! You shall never dine in my house again. Is that the way you keep your word? To go out walking with that young scamp before my very eyes?"

So it was all out. And yet she had not been to blame.

"Yes—I did meet Arthur while I was out. But it was quite by chance. And I was not with him long—not longer than I could help. How could I help it? Indeed I did not mean."

"How many lies are you going to tell me? It was *not* by chance: you *did* mean: and you *were* long—at least two hours: all day for what I know."

"Ask Elise, papa, what time I went out. And how could I meet him on purpose when you burned the note asking me to come?"

"Ask Elise, indeed—your go-between, your——. Are there no ways of letting you know you are wanted besides writing to you? Elise will have warning this very evening—and so will you, young lady."

"Papa!"

"Yes, you young vixen, you undutiful monster. I shan't believe your

word any more. I don't like pie-crust, you know that. And if you make me eat pie-crust, you shall eat the sack. If you don't, on this very spot, give up that scamp, that beggarly son of a swindling bankrupt—ah! you may cry your eyes out if you like, but you shall never eat a meal in my house again as sure as my name's Peter Grode."

But she was by no means crying her eyes out now. It is all very well to weep at harshness, but at injustice one should dry one's eyes and rebel. And so did she.

"I have promised not to see him or write to him till I am twenty-one," she said, right out and bravely, "nor will I. I would not have to-day, even if I had seen the letter. But give him up I will not, unless he gives up me. I have promised to be true to him, and I will. And it is wrong of you to let me love him when he was rich, and to abuse him now that he is poor—when you well know how it was that he became poor: because he is the best, the noblest man in the world."

"You defy me to my face? You insult your own father? You, who can't say 'Bo' to a gosling—whose mouth wouldn't melt melted butter? You are a brute beast, Miss—yes, a brute beast would know its duty better than you; a crawling reptile would have better manners than to call its father a —— what you called me. Once more—will you give up this fellow Cranstoun or no?"

"No," she said only. In fact it was the only thing that was open to her to say. She was doubtless a brave girl for saying it, but had she hesitated she would have been none the less a coward. There are cases in which the fifth commandment is best observed to the spirit by breaking it to the letter.

"Then ——" and he swore a big oath—"Then, you ——" and he called her by what was by no means a pet name—"Go up to your room and pack your things as quick as thunder!" He rang the bell more violently than ever. "Elise, call a cab. Miss Felicia is going away; and you'll pack after as soon as you please: the sooner the better for me. I'll have no undutiful daughters, no go-betweens, no she-devils in my house. And you, Miss Felicia Grode, confound you, may bundle off, bag and baggage, and be Mrs. Cranstoun as soon as *you* please. When you repent at your leisure don't come to me, that's all. Make your bed and lie on it. I've done with it. Bring up dinner."

His anger may appear unreasonably excessive, and well calculated to defeat its own end. But to defeat its own end and to be unreasonable is the way of anger; and it was excessive because it had a twofold cause. *Sic vita est.*

CHAPTER V.

THE WORTH OF A DEAD MAGPIE.

THERE was a Mrs. Levi.

This sounds startling, when it is remembered what sort of a man was Mr. Levi ; but it is less startling when it is understood that Mrs. Levi was not Mr. Levi's wife, but his mother.

She was an old Jewess, something more than plain, but not sufficiently ugly to have borne such a son. "*C'était donc, Monsieur votre père qui était si laid,*" as Talleyrand said to some one who was boasting of his mother's beauty. And, whether for his father's sake or his own, she doted upon her Nathan with a love that to any heart but a mother's is simply inconceivable, thinking him the best, wisest, and noblest creature in the world. And, whatever his merits or demerits might be, he was at all events a model son.

Well he might be : well might he bestow upon his mother all the affection that was in his heart to bestow, for there was certainly no one in the world but she who would have held him either good or noble ; who would not have held him either in fear or scorn. But he to her was as the very apple of her eye. She had been his protectress in his infancy, his willing slave while he was making his way in the world, and he was now showing his gratitude to her in his prosperity by sharing his prosperity with her.

They lived together in a large house in the neighbourhood of Paddington, in much solitude as far as friends and acquaintances were concerned, but in a style of much luxury as regarded themselves. Domestic matters were attended to by a housekeeper, who was a Jewess well on in years, and who was besides a devoted companion to the old lady, and a faithful servant to her master. These three made up the family : and there were a good many servants besides who found their places not altogether unprofitable. In fact, the expenditure of the household bordered upon the extravagant. Levi himself, if he was greedy in getting, was not sparing in spending—indeed, it is a characteristic of his people that, if they are *alieni avidi*—which may or may not be the case with them more than with Gentiles—they are also *sui profusi*. An avaricious Jew is, of course, as common as an avaricious Gentile ; but a Hebrew is less common than a Gentile miser, let people say what they will. "The People," if they understand the value of money, know its use also.

But though—with the exception of his mother and of his housekeeper, Judith—he had no friends, a great many people were well, a great many far too well, acquainted with the hideous dwarf. The number of irons that he had in the fire were well nigh innumerable. He was practically the banker of half the eldest sons of England, to whom he advanced money at—well, shame refuses to say at how much *per cent*. But he was a generous banker in his way, and cared more for interest than for security : as the story of the sale shows he was content to risk much for the bare

chance of a large return. His was the principle of blockade-runners : he went in for grand *coups*, and even calculated upon losing eleven cargoes out of twelve. But then his profits upon the twelfth more than recouped him for his losses on the eleven. Then he was a dealer in pictures and in works of art generally ; and he was the depositary of more than half the jewellery of great ladies whose pin-money was not sufficient to pay for their pins. And he did a great deal besides in funds, in theatres, and in shares of all sorts and kinds. In fact, wherever money was to be turned, there was Nathan Levi, with his pitchfork in his vulture talons, to help turn it. And, somehow, he generally stood on the sunny side of the hay-cock. A man must have something to live for : and for him, upon whom no man could look without contempt, no woman without loathing, what was there to live for but one thing ? Indeed, in such cases, I doubt if the pursuit of gold, though for its own sake, is altogether ignoble. It contains the romance of impossible love—the glory of closed ambition. Lust of pleasure and lust of fame have their bards, while lust of gold is treated with a contempt at the hands of poets which is ill-deserved, seeing that freedom from it is not by any means one of their special virtues. But is the lust that is praised in itself nobler than the lust that is condemned ? Are not both alike vanity and apples of the Dead Sea ? For my part, I consider Alexander the Great as being very much on a level with John Elwes.

But, as I do not expect one of my readers to agree with me, let us all return to our sheep, or rather to our shepherd, before whose shears the wool of many a silly, if not quite innocent, sheep had fallen.

He carried home his purchases in his yellow brougham. Then he dined alone, hurling into his ogrish mouth a whole feast of Guildhall. He ate the acres of many a fair estate ; he drank rivers of gold and silver, molten into champagne. When he had finished, he had his own private cabinet illuminated with wax candles, gave the strictest orders both to his valet and to Judith that he was not to be disturbed, and retired in order to examine and to report to himself upon the purchases of the morning.

A Rembrandt, whose *chiaroscuro* was enough to send a connoisseur wild with delight, but which he admired because he had got it a bargain : a Giorgione, over which he shook his head a little, fearing that he had given for it a few pounds more than he intended : a Michael Angelo of doubtful pedigree, which would require a little doctoring : and a Rubens. And then he came to the Jones.

Once more he shook his big head and pondered.

“There must be something in this thing,” he thought, half aloud. “People don’t run up a picture to eighty thousand pounds and then offer to buy it for eighty-five thousand guineas without a reason. Sentiment ! Pooh ! No one ever wanted to spend that on sentiment : and besides, I know that Grode couldn’t raise it at once if he realised everything he’s got in the world. A warm man, Grode : but he was not christened Fortunatus. Eighty thousand ! It’s as much as I can manage myself in these hard

times. Suppose this should turn out rubbish after all?" His red hair almost stood on end with panic at the idea. It was all very well to run risks; but to risk a princely fortune on a dead magpie by Jones! But no—it could not be: it must not be.

His anxiety may not be easily comprehended by one to whom pounds are as pence and who can afford to risk any number of them for a whim. But Nathan Levi, rich man as he was, was by no means in this position. To one who made and spent and risked money after his apparently reckless fashion, the nicest calculations, the most accurate balancing of chances was necessary in order to eliminate the element of recklessness in his speculations. He happened just now to have many grand *coups* on hand, the result of which, taken altogether, would prove certain gain, as they were at present arranged, but would prove almost certain ruin if combined with the failure of an additional venture like this for which he had not provided when he had arranged his present financial campaign. Still, on the whole, he had doubtless acted like a prudent man, though a bold one. His logic had been perfect—it was morally impossible that Mr. Grode should have fought so desperately to get this picture without an adequate motive.

And yet!—

So he took a fine sponge, which he dipped into some preparation, the secret of which he had bought for nothing from some needy inventor, and wetted and gently wiped the cracked surface to find some masterpiece of art. There must be something! Perhaps, even—wild and glorious thought!—it might be the very *Venus Anadyomene* of Apelles—that, indeed, would be cheap at a hundred thousand pounds.

For many minutes he sponged and rubbed, first in one place and then in another—first delicately, then more decidedly.

At last, as if he had been working at a forge, huge beads of perspiration began to gather where his forehead ought to have been, and to roll down into his grizzly red beard. It was only too true. The picture was only worth the price of the canvas now, and of the fly-blown frame. Even the magpie was spoiled by the rubbing, and was a magpie no more.

He let his head drop for a moment heavily upon the table, and then rose from his seat in unutterable despair. The process had not been long, but it had been final. His admirable logic was scattered to the winds: and, if he had not been mad before, he felt that he must be mad now. He had better have realised his capital and thrown it, or himself, into the sea. Could Mr. Grode have done this to trick—to ruin him? Could Mr. Grode himself have been deceived?

He raised his head and gazed in despair at the wretched evidence of his madness. Then he kicked away his chair violently, and with a groan and sort of spring, dashed himself down upon the floor. He was grotesque even in his rage, rolling about, and wringing and gnawing his hands with his savage teeth till they bled, and groaning as if he were at the door of death. If with his unsuccessful rival it had been "O my ducats—O my daughter," with him it was "O my ducats—O my ducats!" unmixed with

any human sentiment whatever. And the worst of it was that it was his own cunning that had betrayed him. A good man of business had been eager to spend a fortune upon this trash. Surely it ought to have been a *grand coup*—and it had proved a *grand coup* indeed—grand enough to make him a ruined man.

Then he rushed at what had once been a picture once more: rubbed it all over again till the canvas showed, examined front and back and sides, looked at it in every possible light, held it to the fire, tried upon it all sorts of chemical compounds, which he seemed to know well how to use, and of which he had good store: but all was in vain. Neither picture nor palimpsest was it: even the poor magpie had vanished into nothingness under all this treatment. Finally he overthrew the table, candles and all, gave a portentous groan, and finally dashed his fist through the canvas, which he hurled with all his force, frame and all, right to the other end of the room.

The room was now buried in darkness, except for the dull light of the fire that was almost dead for want of attention. He threw himself into a low arm-chair that stood by its side, gazed absently into the embers, grasped his huge head with his torn and stained hands, and delivered himself up to misery.

It was a fearful sight to see this hideous piece of humanity, rendered by sordid despair more hideous still. And yet the loss of a life's labour is always tragic, to whatever end the labour may have been directed. It was not, after all, so much the loss of the mere gold that affected him thus, though the loss of the mere gold meant simple ruin. He was in the position of a lover who has lost the mistress of his whole soul—of a king who has lost his kingdom. It was not his fault that he could not look sublime in his distress; that the martyrdom which his whole form expressed to the full was only the martyrdom of Mammon. But there was no help for it now. He could not get out of his bargain. The sale had been made publicly in open day, and was notorious to all the world. There was nothing left for him but to groan over his spilled milk, and either cut his throat or hang himself, if he could find sufficient space between his breast and chin to insert a rope or a razor.

He had given strict orders not to be disturbed, so that no one came to him. He was therefore left alone with his ruin. He did not fall asleep: his eyes long outwatched the dying embers of the fire. But he remained in a trance intelligible to those only who have lost not only all that they have, but all that they hope for. There might, of course, be roads out of his difficulty, but he was not in a state of mind to perceive how they would run. He could only see that the picture, if such it could be called any longer, must be paid for, and that all his other schemes would, in consequence, fall to the ground. He would be unable to feed speculations, to make advances, or to answer calls, while his credit was already pledged to the full; and the addling of all his eggs together meant the total loss, not of eighty thousand, but of hundreds of thousands. Even if he went

through the Court he would have to begin the world again ; and to begin the world is hard for one at whose fall the world would rejoice. At last the late winter morning began to break, and he was roused to something like life again by a numb feeling of cold that ran through all his limbs. The fire was long dead, and such warmth as there was, was merely the lingering memory of what had once been the warmth of a comfortable room. He wondered, as he slowly relaxed his grasp of his head, whether he had actually been asleep or no—whether the whole had not been a dream. But his wonder only lasted for a moment, like a last dying gleam of hopeless hope ; and then once more the cruel reality of his insanity came upon him with tenfold intensity, and as coldly as the morning of the new day. And he was now miserable in body as well as prostrate in mind.

I think—of course I cannot know—that if the natural history of suicide were properly understood, it would be found that the state of the body has far more to do with the matter than the state of the mind. To speak in philosophical language, mental anguish may be the *causa causans*, but bodily misery is the *causa sine quā non* : in other words, both mind and body must be brought into harmony before the latter will destroy itself for the sake of the former. And there is no period at which the real actual bodily wretchedness of a man who is inclined to despair is so complete as during the early hours of a cold dawn after a long and sleepless night. Reaction and depression are then at their strongest, and the very thought of a new day is sufficient to make the idea of life seem insupportable, even in cases where mental anguish is not extreme. Even to the exceptionally healthy, to the exceptionally happy, there is something unspeakably dreary about the hours immediately preceding sunrise, when they are numbed with cold and sleeplessness. It is, in very fact, the hour of death, when more souls take their departure from earth than at any other of the twenty-four, and when death's fiend or angel, whichever he may be, goes about to gather all the harvest he can before the return of his eternal enemy, the sun. No wonder, then, that the ruined speculator called to mind that among all his chemicals there must at least be one that, in one moment, would prevent the return of the sun for ever. So, shivering in every limb, he let himself slide forward from the deep arm-chair in which he had been sitting until the disproportioned extremities of his short legs touched the carpet, and then, staggering like a man who has just slept off a heavy debauch followed by nightmare, groped about blindly for the means of striking a light, by no means an easy task in the darkness, especially as the downfall of the table had confused the geography of the room.

At last, however, he found his way, though not without having stumbled many times, or without striking his shins several severe blows against pieces of furniture that, as is the way with furniture generally, had been spending their midnight holiday in apparently scattering themselves at random about the room ; and then the light of a lucifer threw its feeble glimmer over the general confusion. The first thing that caught at all events one of his two eyes was the broken frame that he had hurled

away from him, and that was now lying at his feet. It was the final insult to his remorse. Instinctively he kicked at it once more ; and then his other eye saw upon the floor something just faintly shining with the pale light of a glow-worm that had hitherto been covered by the rags of canvas.

He lighted another lucifer, picked up one of the candles from its congealed pool of grease, and searched in a cupboard full of bottles. In a minute or two he stood intently regarding a phial labelled "Poison."

What another second would have brought about would have been the visit of a coroner's jury, had not just then the same spot of pale green light upon the carpet attracted, nay, unconsciously fascinated, the eye which was not fixed upon the bottle. It is in such moments as these that men take notice of the very smallest things.

Mechanically and without thought he lifted it ; mechanically he lifted it up to the light. It was an instance of the strength of the ruling passion even in death. Suddenly a bright flash seemed to penetrate from it through his eyes. A cold shiver, not caused by the outer cold, ran through him from head to foot, while the phial of poison fell from his hand and broke to pieces on the floor. He bore it frantically to the table ; he examined it all over with the energy of a madman ; he turned over books and memoranda ; he devoted himself to its inspection until the sunlight of a bright frosty morning had risen and pierced through the cracks of the shutters. Then he drew a long breath, rose, and threw them open, till the winter sun fairly streamed in. The first ray of daylight flashed back into his brain, transformed by what lay upon the table to a rich and glorious green.

IT WAS THE GREAT EMERALD OF KANDAHAR, WORTH SIX MILLION POUNDS.
